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STRANGE, THOMAS LUMISDEN

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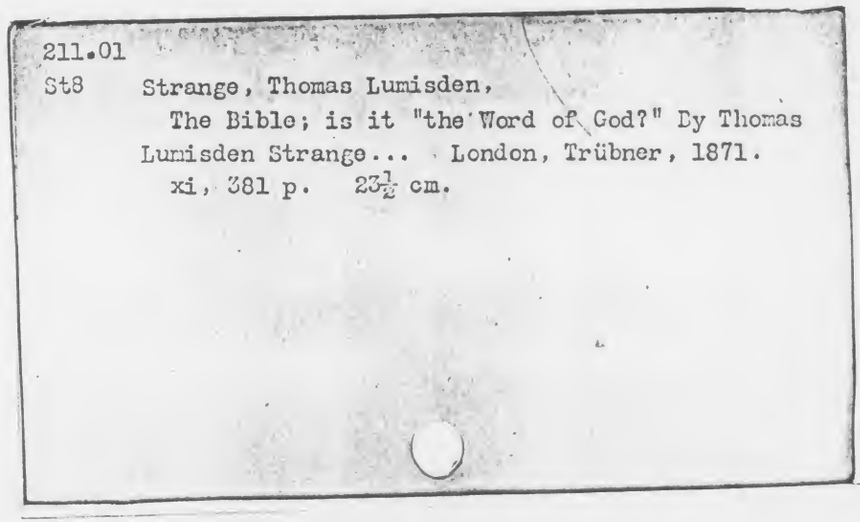

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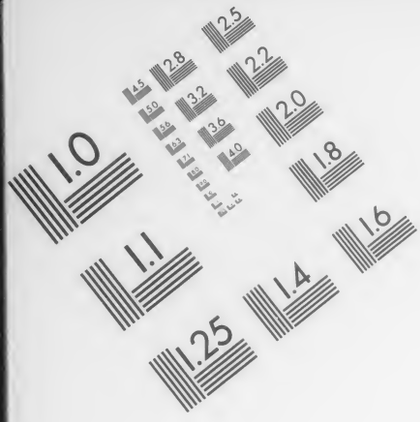

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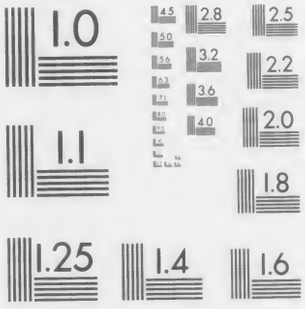

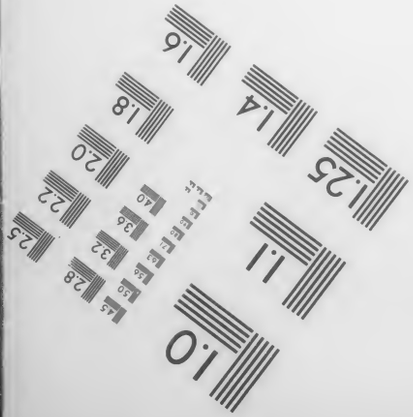

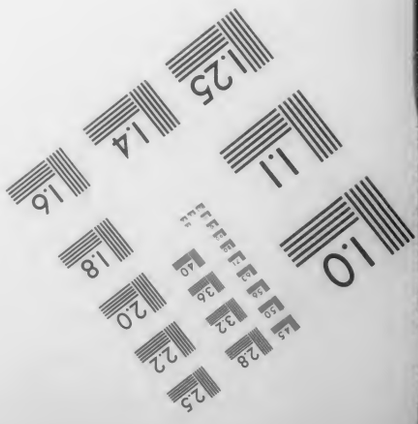

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THE BIBLE;

IS IT

"THE WORD OF GOD?"

BY

THOMAS LUMISDEN STRANGE,

LATE A JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT OF MADRAS.

LONDON:

N. TRÜBNER & CO., 60 PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXI.

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"It is more honourable to see wisely what is presented for observation, than to believe there can be anything worthy to be called sound judgment in refusing to see it."—Baldwin on Pre-Historic Nations, 351.

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PREFACE.

The question placed upon my title page is one that should not be difficult to reply to, nor provoke serious difference of judgment. The divine being is so immeasurably superior in the faculties possessed by the human race, that in estimating any work that possibly may be common to him and man, the marks of distinction between the product of the infallible and perfect workman, and that of the fallible and imperfect one, should be readily discernible. The conflict of opinion that has arisen on the pretensions of the Bible to be of divine origin is owing, not to the matter to be judged being ill defined or obscure, but because, commonly, the question is settled, in the affirmative, without examination. That this book is the very word of God, is an opinion formed for us in our childhood, and early impressions, whatever their character, take firm hold. A twig to which an artificial form has been given in the days of its pliancy, defies the efforts made at a later time to bring it back to its natural shape. And it is with such a warp on the judgment that in Christian lands the investigation of the authority of the Bible must be taken up, if indeed ever entered upon. But with the great body the conviction induced in youth is the final one, the mind resenting any attempt to interfere with its cherished belief. Those who have depended all their lives on corks or crutches, naturally are afraid to trust to their own proper unaided powers, and to

the unused senses, to contemplate life without a recorded revelation from God, is as formidable as would be the proposition to float in air, or navigate the ocean, without material support.

The Bible consists of facts and doctrine. The doctrine may be tried by its moral consequences, but the facts must necessarily be established, in the universal manner, by evidence of their occurrence. The doctrine, however beneficial and true, cannot, of itself, give currency to the fact. Assuming, for example, that it is a wholesome idea that we should have a mediator to stand between ourselves and God, it still becomes necessary to ascertain who that mediator may be; and this can only be done by examining the pretensions of whoever may offer himself to fill this place, by judging of the statements given concerning him. We are told that there may be "false christs," that "Satan himself" may be "transformed into an angel of light," and "his ministers as the ministers of righteousness;" and by this test of the evidence the imputed author of Christianity, in fact, has elected to stand, saying, "The same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."

However unpleasant it may be to the great body of professing Christians to have opinions they have long maintained subjected to questioning and examination, the process, at all events, is one not discountenanced, but encouraged, by the book they appeal to as the divine support of their convictions. And in the nature of the objects presented in this book for reception, such an examination is necessary to warrant the faith therein invited. This is the task I have now undertaken. Having long lived under the sense that the Bible revelations

were "the power of God unto salvation," and been brought at length, through the force of facts, to question their divine authority, now, that through study of this momentous subject, every doubt and difficulty that obscured my own mind has been removed, I have the natural desire to make the fruits of my researches available to others.

I have cast my observations in the shape of a conversation with an educated person, free of his former religious persuasions, and in search of a true creed, and have adopted this form in order the better to open out the subject from its basis, and to exhibit the testimony as it might present itself to a mind uninfluenced by prior conceptions. In so doing I have felt free to use the Bible just as it is presented to us for ordinary use. It is the authorised version, as rendered into our own language, which is the standard of the Englishman's faith, and I have not sought to account for, qualify, or accommodate, any part of its communications, by resort to critical limitations.

Such being the method employed, the present effort is necessarily restricted in its range, embracing only what relates to the history of the Old and New Testaments, and the support claimed for them by agency superhuman, and therefore professing to be divine. This includes the miracles and marvels proper, the prophecies, and the miraculous history of Jesus. There is much else, bearing upon the same point, whether the book is traceable to God or man, upon which I do not now touch; such as the accounts of the creation, fall, and deluge; the antiquity of the human race; the manifestations of the being and attributes of the Divinity; the doctrinal teachings; the revelations respecting the future state; and the Oriental legends, a knowledge of which gives the key to the whole mystery.

The ground at present occupied by me is already, for the

most part, well trodden. But it is needful, to any deeper inquiries, that the foundations I have explored should be exhibited and properly understood. I have the hope that the labours of every earnest and serious student in this field may still be acceptable. The warfare with surrounding prejudice is a continuous one, and any ray of light should be welcome that may serve to pierce the prevailing mists which disguise, distort, and veil the truth.

GREAT MALVERN, *March* 1871.

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THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN A REFORMED PUNDIT AND A CANDID STUDENT.

PUNDIT.—The Bible has been put into my hands as being the "Word of God." I find great difficulty in judging of the character of this book, and hearing that you have made it your study, I come to you in the hope that you will assist me in understanding how I am to look upon it. I am shaken out of my own persuasion, as a Hindu, and am told by Christians, with whom I have now come into contact, that their book is the only one to trust to. They say, in fact, that my fate in the future state depends upon my accepting, or rejecting, the statements made in this book. Will you, therefore, enable me to judge of its history and authority?

STUDENT.—Gladly: I will answer to the best of my power any questions you may put to me on the subject.

Inspiration of Book.

P.—In what sense is this book to be considered "The Word of God?" God, I presume, did not actually write it?

S.—No; that is not alleged. It was written by man's hand.

P.—Was this effected by some one chosen person, whose thoughts and hand were guided by God to compose the book?

S.—No. The statement is, that various people, at different times, spreading over a long course of years, were used for the purpose; as it is written, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. i. 1).

P.—In what way was this instrumentality made use of?

S.—It is said by acts of inspiration. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16). "Holy men

of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21).

P.—What warrant is there that what these different persons wrote was in very truth put into their heads by God?

S.—This being a matter between themselves and God, there can be no independent testimony of the act of inspiration. The writers say they were so inspired, and demand confidence on the ground of being holy men.

P.—As the holiness of the writers appears to be one of the ingredients to the reception of what they may have said, what assurance is there that they were thus holy?

S.—Of that we cannot be said to have any. We have no account of the lives of any excepting David, the psalmist, and he was steeped in crime. Some of their thoughts, in fact, are on subjects so impure, that people avoid these passages, and wish them expunged; and one writer, Hosea (i. 1-6; iii. 1), carried out in action, alleging he did so by the direct command of God, offences against morality, of which elsewhere it is said that those thus guilty "God will judge" (Heb. xiii. 4).

P.—Then I am to read this book with discrimination, and judge what in it is of man, and not of God.

S.—One would think so; but you are seriously warned against interfering with it in any way. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you; neither shall ye diminish ought from it" (Deut. iv. 2). "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life" (Rev. xxii. 19).

P.—Certainly; it stands to reason, that, if God has considered it necessary to man's welfare in a future state to make verbal communications to him, any interference with his word must bring, not the individual only, but the whole race, into peril. Precautions, worthy of the infallible author, must, of course, have been taken to preserve his word intact. In what language were the inspirations communicated?

Language of Book.

S.—In Hebrew, as regards the Old Testament; and in Greek, as regards the New.

P.—Are these living languages, and generally understood?

S.—No. They are dead, and known only to the learned. Hebrew, for example, has been out of use since the time of Nehemiah, or for more than two thousand three hundred years; as, when the Scripture was read out to the people in his day, they had to "give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading" (Neh. viii. 8); that is, they had to interpret it into the current dialect, which was Chaldee. We also everywhere depend upon translations.

P.—Have the translators been inspired?

S.—No. No one pretends that this has been the case. They have simply done their work to the best of their ability as mere men.

P.—Can you give me a sample of the written Hebrew? I should be glad to have it in English characters.

S.—I can. Here are the first seven verses of Genesis as they originally stood:—

BRASHYTHBRAALHYMATHHSHMYMVATHHARTSVHARTSHYTHHTHHVVBHVVCHSHKGN
LPNYTHHVMVRVCHALHYMMRCHPHTHGNLPNYHMYMVYAMRALHYMYHYAVRVYHYAV
RVYRAALHYMATHHAVRKYTVBVYBRLALHYMBYNHAVRVBYNHCHSHKVYKRAALHYML
AVRYVMVLCHSHKKRALYLHVYHYNGRBVYHYBKRYVMACHDVYAMRALHYMYHYRKYGN
BTHRKHMYMVYHYMEDYLBYNMYMLMYMVYGNSHALHYMATHHRKYGNVYBDLBYNHMY
MASHRMTCHTHLRKYGNVBYNHMYMASHRMGNLLRKYGNVYHYKN.

P.—How is it possible to make anything of this array of letters undivided into words, or to pronounce so many consonants without intervening vowels?

S.—The learned have done that for us. While Hebrew was a living language, the above form of writing was intelligible to those who used it, but when it fell out of use, it became necessary to supply help by dividing the words and introducing the vowels.

P.—How long after the language had become dead was this done?

S.—It is doubtful when the division into words was effected. Points, to represent the vowels, were put in about fifteen hundred years after the language fell out of use.[1]

P.—That is a long interval between the time when there was a familiar knowledge of the language, and the attempt to make its records intelligible. The insertion of vowel points opens out great risk of error. For instance, in English, *m d* might be turned into "mad," "made," "mud," "mid," "maid," and so forth. Are the learned, on whom, of course, the unlearned have to depend, themselves satisfied with the work as performed?

[1] Smith's Dict. of the Bible, *Art.* OLD TEST.

S.—No. Sir Wm. Drummond, for example, says, "I have wholly discarded the Masoretic points. I believe there are few Hebraists will think of undertaking to defend the Masorah."[1] The Masorah is a book of Jewish traditions, to the writers of which these points are attributed.

P.—Is the translation from the Hebrew to be depended on?

S.—No. Sir Wm. Drummond says, "I have seldom seen two Hebraists, who read, and who translated, two chapters alike throughout the whole Scriptures."[2]

Custody of Book.

P.—The Old Testament purports to be a very ancient record. To whom was the custody thereof assigned?

S.—To the Jews. "Unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2).

P.—In what way were they to preserve them?

S.—They were to deposit them in the ark. "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side (*i.e.*, inside) of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. xxxi. 26). The ark was the most sacred object which the Jews possessed, and it was kept in the most holy place in their tabernacle, or temple, to which the high priest alone had access.

P.—Was this order attended to?

S.—No. In the time of Solomon, "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb" (1 Kings viii. 9). These tables contained commandments said to have been written with the finger of God.

The ark.

P.—What has become of these tables of stone, and of the ark?

S.—No one knows. They are not spoken of again after the time of Solomon, that is more than two thousand eight hundred years ago.

P.—Was there not something mysterious about the ark? Had it not some innate power attaching to it such as is alleged as respects objects of Fetich worship?

S.—So it is said. It is described as the appointed place where God would hold communication with Moses. "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will

[1] Œdipus Judaicus, xvii., xviii. [2] Idem, 80.

give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel (Ex. xxv. 22.) Moses goes, on an occasion, for the purpose of this communing. "Then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony from between the two cherubims" (Num. vii. 89.) Aaron was warned not to come "at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not; for I will appear," (God is said to have declared), "in the cloud upon the mercy-seat" (Lev. xvi. 2). The ark was at one time captured by the Philistines, and carried into the house of their god Dagon. In the morning it was found that "Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him" (1 Sam. v. 4). On another occasion, God is said to have "smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men" (1 Sam. vi. 19). On another, when the ark was being conveyed on a cart, one "Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.)

P.—If Aaron could not approach the ark except on stated occasions, under penalty of death; and if one man was struck dead for holding it up when shaken on the cart; and if thousands were destroyed for simply looking into it; how could the Philistines have possessed themselves of this sacred object without incurring destruction? And how could it have finally been made away with, without a record appearing of the noteworthy circumstances that must have attended the ultimate profanation, or destruction, of what appears to have been God's throne on earth?

S.—I am unable to tell you.

Promulgation of Book.

P.—To revert to the "Book of the Law," which was to have been preserved within the ark, besides the committing it to what certainly should have been safe custody, were any methods enjoined for promulgating it among the people?

S.—Yes. Each king, as he succeeded to the throne, was

to make a copy of it, "and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life" (Deut. xvii. 18, 19). When the Israelites had passed into the land conferred upon them, they were to set up large stones and plaster them over, and inscribe "all the words of this law" upon them. "Thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly" (Deut. xxvii. 2-8). And every seven years, when assembled at Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, the priests were to "read this law before all Israel in their hearing" (Deut. xxxi. 10, 11).

P.—You astonish me. It must have been an enormous work to inscribe all the Book of the Law upon plastered stones. Was this accomplished?

S.—So it is stated. Within the compass of an altar constructed by him, Joshua is said to have written upon the stones of it "a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel." Then he read it out, and "there was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" (Josh. viii. 30-35).

P.—What might have been about the number of the multitude?

S.—At the time the Israelites left Egypt, or forty years before the act in question of Joshua, the number of the adult males of Israel, without reckoning the Levites, was found to be 603,550 (Num. ii. 32, 33). This, it has been computed, would represent a population of from two to three millions.[1]

P.—How could one man have compassed so much writing, and then have made his voice reach to so vast a multitude?

S.—I am unable to say.

P.—Are there any remains of these inscribed stones?

S.—We never hear of them again.

P.—How could it be expected that the people should apprehend, and bear in mind, such an extensive and minute collection of precepts and laws as are contained in the books attributed to Moses, on hearing them read out to them but once in seven years?

S.—I cannot tell you.

[1] Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch, I. 35.

P.—Were the orders that each king was to take a copy of the law, and that it was to be read out thus publicly at the feast of tabernacles, observed?

S.—There is evidence to the contrary.

P.—Perhaps, as the book of the law was not kept in its appointed place, within the ark, I should rather ask was such a book ever forthcoming?

Discovery of Book.

S.—Such a book was discovered in the reign of Josiah, which was upwards of 800 years after the edict was given to lay up the book in the ark, and about 350 from the time of Solomon, when it is seen it was not there. "And Hilkiah the highpriest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings xxii. 8).

P.—What certainty was there that the book so found was the original record containing the inspired word of God?

S.—The persons who are said to have so found it are represented to have thought it to be such. There is no other assurance.

P.—Can you account for the book being all along in the temple, and yet not known of to the priesthood till Hilkiah brought it to light?

S.—I am unable to do so.

P.—Were there any writers of that day, and do they say anything of this discovery?

S.—The prophet Jeremiah was of that time. He says a good deal about the priests, to their prejudice, and shows that his mind was exercised on the subject of the law. He makes no mention of the book, and it is to be gathered that it was an oral, not a written code, that was current in his day. Anticipating "devices" against himself, he says, "the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. xviii. 18).

Observance of the Law.

P.—Putting aside the question of the actual custody of the book, can its existence be established by the fact of the observation of its precepts during the eight hundred years in question that intervened between Moses and Josiah?

S.—No; that cannot be satisfactorily shown. Ignorance is displayed of some of the most prominent of these laws, such as cannot be reconciled with their currency in those days.

(1.) There is not a trace of any king having provided himself with a copy of the law.

(2.) Nor does it appear that there was ever a promulgation of the law to the people. There is not even a note that the feast of tabernacles, at which the law was to be promulgated, was kept.

(3.) The Israelites, when they entered the land appointed to them, were to have no relations whatever with the people they were to dispossess, but were to exterminate them. "When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them" (Deut. vii. 2). But no sooner did they come into the land than they made a covenant with Rahab of Jericho, and all her house, and saved them alive (Josh. ii. 14; vi. 17, 22, 23); and then with the Canaanites of Gezer, whom "they drave not out," but placed under tribute (Josh. xvi. 10); also with the people of Bethshean, and five other Canaanitish tribes inhabiting numerous "towns" (Josh. xvii. 11-13). David, in like manner, spared the Moabites, and the Syrians, and accepted gifts from them (2 Sam. viii. 2, 6; x. 19). Solomon also entered into terms with Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, and took tribute from them (1 Kings ix. 20, 21); and, in fact, he allied himself with all the tribes "from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt" (1 Kings iv. 21). Jehosaphat did the like with Philistines and Arabians (2 Chron. xvii. 11).

(4.) "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them" (Deut. vii. 3). Salmon married Rahab of Jericho, and their fourth direct descendant was David, from whom came the whole line of the kings of Judah (Matt. i. 5, 6). Naomi's two sons married Moabitish women. When these became widows, one of them, Ruth, married Boaz, and from them king David was the third in descent (Ruth i. 4; iv. 13, 17). David married Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur (2 Sam. iii. 3), and also Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah the Hittite, and from this latter union came Solomon (2 Sam. xi. 26, 27). And Solomon no sooner came to the throne, and while still in full acceptance by God, than he married a daughter of the king of Egypt (1 Kings iii. 1).

(5.) "An Ammonite," it is said, "or Moabite, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever" (Deut. xxiii. 3). Neither David, who had in him the blood of Canaanitish and Moabitish ancestry, nor his son Solomon, whose descent was further tainted with the blood of a Hittite, can be said to have had the requisite purity of stock; and yet we have the one elected king as a man after God's heart, and the other the chosen builder of the temple.

(6.) "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be be put to death" (Lev. xx. 10). David committed adultery with Uriah's wife (2 Sam. xi. 4), and while both he and she should have suffered death, they were allowed to marry and become the parents of a whole line of kings.

(7.) "He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death" (Lev. xxiv. 17). "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death" (Num. xxxv. 31). "He shall be delivered into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee" (Deut. xix. 11-13). If ever there was "innocent blood" shed, it was that of Uriah, and the guilt of his murder was deepened by its motive, the adultery with his wife. Nathan was God's appointed instrument to deal with David for his crime. "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword," was Nathan's judgment on him, "and hast taken his wife to be thy wife." And for this double guilt God is represented to have "taken satisfaction" by destroying the innocent offspring of the adulterous intercourse (2 Sam xii. 1, 9, 14).

(8.) It was enjoined on the king that he should not "multiply wives unto himself, that his heart turn not away" (Deut. xvii. 17). David evidently knew of no such divine restriction. His first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, being taken from him, he compensated himself with two others, Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Sam. xxv. 42-44). When king in

Hebron, we find him with four more; namely, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah (2 Sam. iii. 3-5). As soon as he had established himself in Jerusalem, he "took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem" (2 Sam. v. 13). How many we are not told. The concubines were so numerous, that, when he fled from Absalom, he could leave ten "to keep the house" (2 Sam. xv. 16). It appears, moreover, that he had appropriated all Saul's relicts, who, according to the prophet Nathan, had been given over "into his bosom" by God (2 Sam. xii. 8), the Deity violating his own order. What number of females were thus added to the royal seraglio we are not informed. Still not satisfied, this model king, through the murder of Uriah, possessed himself of Bathsheba in addition (2 Sam. xi. 27).

(9.) The priestly office was not general to the Levites, but was confined to the family of Aaron (Ex. xxviii. 1); and to invade it was death (Num. iii. 10). Accordingly, when Korah, who was a mere Levite, and Dathan and Abiram, who were Reubenites, aspired to the priesthood, the earth opened in judgment upon them, and swallowed them up, with all who belonged to them (Num xvi. 1-40). Gideon, who was an Abiezrite—that is, of the tribe of Manasseh—made an offering to an angel, which was accepted, fire coming miraculously at the angel's touch out of the rock on which the offering had been laid, and consuming it. And after this, he built an altar, and was ordered by God to sacrifice upon it (Jud. vi. 11-27). Manoah was of the tribe of Dan. He was visited by an angel, before whom he "took a kid, with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord." And the priestly offices of this Danite were accepted: "For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar" (Jud. xiii. 2, 20). Micah, an Ephraimite, consecrates one of his own sons, who thus "became his priest." Then he meets with a man "of the family of Judah," who, nevertheless, is considered to be "a Levite." Micah "consecrates" him, and hires him to be his domestic priest, the worship, however, being idolatrous; and then he says, in his simplicity, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest" (Jud. xvii. 1-13). After this, the children

of Dan set up one Jonathan to be their priest; and he is described as the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh. He should properly have been an Aaronite. Of what tribe he really was, is not clear. As the son of Gershom, he would be a Levite; but again, with strange confusion, he is derived from Manasseh. Of this family, nevertheless, it is said that they "were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land" (Jud. xviii 30). Samuel was of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Sam. i. 1), and yet exercised the priestly office acceptably. "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him" (1 Sam. vii. 9). On the occasion of bringing up the ark, which had been captured by the Philistines, the Levites, (it is not said the Aaronites,) "offered seven bullocks and seven rams" (1 Chron. xv. 26). And David, who was of Judah, headed the procession, "clothed with a robe of fine linen," and having on "an ephod of linen," which was a priestly garb (Lev. vi. 10; Ex. xxviii. 6), and officiated. "And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord" (1 Chron. xv. 27; xvi. 1, 2). On another occasion, there was a divine recognition of his act, God having "answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering (1 Chron. xxi. 26). Solomon, his son, officiated in the same manner. "And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand sheep" (1 Kings viii. 62, 63). And this met with divine acceptance, for "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifice; and the glory of the Lord filled the house" (2 Chron. vii. 1). Elijah the Tishbite, who was of Gilead, that is, of the tribe of Manasseh (1 Kings xvii. 1; Num. xxvi. 29), placed himself in competition with the priests of Baal, and erected an altar, on which he offered up a bullock, and fire from heaven came down and burnt up the sacrifice, in token that God had accepted it (1 Kings xviii. 19-38).

(10.) Of the Levites, that division who were Kohathites had charge of the ark. The Aaronites were first to cover up the

ark and the other holy furniture, and the Kohathites were to carry the same during the pilgrimage in the desert (Num. iii. 31; iv. 4-15.) They were not even to set eyes on these sacred objects, when uncovered, under penalty of death (Num. iv. 20). The Philistines captured the ark, but finding it a troublesome possession, they gave it up. Then "the men of Kirjath-jearim," (not Kohathites, be it observed,) "came and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar, his son, to keep the ark of the Lord; and it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long, for it was twenty years" (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2). At the end of this time David came with his people, "and they set the ark of God upon a new cart," drawn by "oxen," and so took it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. "And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household" (2 Sam. vi. 1-11). From thence David took it to Jerusalem (v. 12-16), and in the parallel account in Chronicles it is said that Levites, (not, however, Kohathites,) were employed for the purpose (1 Chron. xv. 1, 15). Throughout, the covering the ark up from profane eyes by the Aaronites, and the peculiar office of the Kohathites in its transport, are regulations evidently unknown of; and this sacred object is even borne on a cart as any other commodity might be, and is twice deposited in private houses. On the last occasion, the abode of one who would seem to have been of a Gentile tribe (2 Sam. xv. 19) was made use of.

(11.) There was to be none other than the one appointed altar for sacrificial purposes. The edict was, "whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer it unto the Lord, even that man shall be cut off from among his people" (Lev. xvii. 8, 9). "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest; but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee" (Deut. xii. 13, 14). This law was understood in the days of

Joshua, as shown when a certain section of the tribes justified themselves, and described an altar they had set up to be a testimonial one, and not for sacrifice (Josh. xxii. 9-29); but subsequently it was unknown to, or overlooked, by even the pious rulers of Judah. Samuel judged Israel in rotation, at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and there he performed sacrifices. He also set up an altar at his own house in Ramah (1 Sam. vii. 5-12, 16, 17; x. 3, 8). David built an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan, and sacrificed there with acceptance. Besides this, Gibeon was in his day the constituted place for sacrifice (1 Chron. xxi. 26-29). Absalom sacrificed in Hebron (2 Sam. xv. 9, 12), and Adonijah at Enrogel (1 Kings i. 9). Elijah did so on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 19-38). Asa, Jehosaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham, all godly kings, tolerated sacrifices on high places. Manasseh did so even after his reformation (1 Kings xv. 14; xxii. 43; 2 Kings xii. 3; xiv. 4; xv. 4, 35; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17).

(12.) "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God" (Ex xxiii. 14, 17; xxxiv. 23); a requisition unknown to the father of Samuel, who observed a yearly attendance only (1 Sam. i. 3, 7). Nor is it shown that others followed such an ordinance.

(13.) Every seventh year was to be a sabbath, or time of rest for the land, during which all sowing and cultivation was to be suspended. Supplies of food were to be assured by a three-fold crop, granted on the sixth year (Ex. xxiii. 10, 11; Lev. xxv. 3, 4, 20, 21). By the application made of the prophesied exile in Babylon for seventy years, each year of exile standing for a neglected sabbatical year, there is the acknowledgment that for a term of four hundred and ninety years, or from the time of David, this institution had been overlooked (Lev. xxvi. 33-35; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.) It may, indeed, be safely assumed that it never was, or indeed could be, observed.

Effects of discovery of Book.

P.—What is stated to have been the effect of the discovery of the "book of the law" by Hilkiah? Did it come upon the parties as a familiar, or as a hitherto unknown communication?

S.—Evidently as what they had hitherto been entirely ignorant of. The king is said to have "rent his clothes,"

to have publicly proclaimed the law, to have put down idolatries, slaying the priests who had officiated therein, and then to have celebrated the passover, finding it "written in the book of this covenant" that there was such an ordinance to be observed. "Surely," it is declared, "there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Judah" (2 Kings xxii. 11; xxiii. 1-24). The probability is that the passover had hitherto not been observed at all throughout the period in question, for there is not one instance of its occurrence save in a passage in 2 Chron. xxx. 2. It is there said that Hezekiah kept a passover, but the statement is not supported by the contemporaneous record in the book of Kings, and as he was a godly king, he would have kept it in just as good form as Josiah. Certainly the feast had been greatly overlooked, though the penalty for neglecting it was death (Num. ix. 13).

Ezra's production of Book.

P.—Did this book of Hilkiah's serve to keep up the knowledge of the law in the times succeeding?

S.—No. The alleged discovery of the book led to no such solid results. A book of the sort is again produced by Ezra, 150 years later, and then the people, and even the priesthood, are found to be as ignorant of its provisions as if they had never been extant. The feast of tabernacles purports to have been instituted to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt (Lev. xxiii. 34-43). They suddenly discover that there was such a feast to be observed. "And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses that the children of Israel should dwell in booths" (Neh. viii. 1, 14). And then they "found written that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever," and upon this information they take action. "Now it came to pass when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude" (Neh. xiii. 1-3). Ezra himself, a few years previously, instituted the like reform among the body who accompanied him, on which occasion the transgression was found to embrace all the priesthood as well as the people at large (Ezra ix. and x).

P.—Is there anything to show that Ezra's book was that which Hilkiah is said to have brought to light?

S.—There is not.

P.—Is there anything to connect Ezra's book with any existing version?

S.—Only tradition or supposition.

Earliest versions.

P.—What is the earliest extant version of the Bible?

S.—The Septuagint.

P.—What is that?

S.—It is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek.

P.—When was that made, and under what circumstances?

S.—About B.C. 280, or upwards of 150 years after the publication by Ezra. When Judea fell into the hands of the Ptolemies, the Greek rulers of Egypt in succession to Alexander the Great, many Jews congregated in Alexandria, and became more conversant with the language of their conquerors than with their own, and this Septuagint translation was made for their use.

P.—Does it correspond with the current English version?

S.—No. It differs greatly in its renderings, and it contains fourteen books which the Protestants reject as apocryphal, or spurious, but which the Catholics still retain as inspired.

P.—When were these books rejected by the Protestants, and on what authority?

S.—About 350 years ago, on the judgment of the leaders of the movement.

P.—Might not these leaders have gone further and rejected others of the books?

S.—Assuredly.

P.—Are any others called in question?

S.—The authenticity, integrity, or era, of several are challenged; for example, of Esther, Job, Isaiah, Daniel, Jonah, and Zechariah. The Books of Chronicles are, moreover, considered unreliable by most critics. There are also detached passages elsewhere, which are viewed by critics as interpolated.

P.—Are there no Hebrew versions of the Jewish scriptures?

S.—There are.

P.—Of what period is the most ancient of them?

S.—No satisfactory information exists on this head. It is not thought that there is any Hebrew copy of the Old Testament more than seven or eight hundred years old.[1] This

[1] Smith's Dict., Art. OLD TEST.

stands at an interval of fifteen hundred years from the publication of the law by Ezra. The Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases, are more ancient. That of Onkelos on the Pentateuch is supposed to date from about A.D. 200.[1]

Authorship of Pentateuch.

P.—Can you say by whose hand the Book of the Law, supposing the existing version to be a genuine one, was written?

S.—The Pentateuch is currently ascribed to Moses; but there is much to make it evident that it must have been put together long after his time.

P.—Be pleased to make this apparent to me.

S.—There is the account of the death of Moses in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which of course could not have been written by himself. Nor could the edict to place "this book" in the ark (Deut. xxxi. 26), have been written until after the book so indicated had been completed. If this passage stands in its proper place, some termination must be given to the book at a previous part. We are even carried back as far as to Ex. xxiv. 7 for the completion of some such work, where it is said, that Moses "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." All this shows that the work of Moses, if this book could in truth be thought primarily his, has been supplemented by some other hand. The writer repeatedly refers to circumstances subsisting "unto his day" (Gen. xix. 37, 38; xxvi. 33; xxxii. 32; Deut. iii. 14; xxxiv. 6), showing he wrote at a day removed from the events. He speaks of the cessation of the manna provided for the Israelites when in the desert, which occurred after the time of Moses, when they had entered Canaan (Ex. xvi. 35). He names places such as Dan (Gen. xiv. 14; Deut. xxxiv. 1), Hebron (Gen. xiii. 18; xxiii. 2; Num. xiii. 22), Gilgal (Deut. xi. 30), which only received their names after the conquests in Canaan (Jud. xviii. 29; Josh. xiv. 15; Josh. v. 9). He speaks of a time when the Canaanites and Perizzites were "then in the land" (Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7), showing he wrote after they had been ejected from it; and he evidences distinct knowledge of this ejectment (Lev. xviii. 28). He refers to the occupation of the land by the Israelites as an event of some standing, saying, "as it is this day" (Deut. iv. 38).

[1] Smith's Dict., Art. VERSIONS.

He shows a knowledge of kingly rule prevailing in Israel (Gen. xxvi. 31), their first king not having been set up till 350 years after the time of Moses. And where, under the guise of a prophecy, he describes the Israelites as "rooted out of their land," and "cast into another land as it is this day" (Deut. xxix. 28), he is seen to stand in the Babylonish captivity which occurred 850 years after Moses.

P. To whom, then, can you attribute the authorship?

Ezra's publication.

S.—We come, now, to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The captivity lasted between fifty and sixty years, and Ezra and Nehemiah came out of it. The historical portion of the Bible is brought down to their day, and then terminates, and it was by them that the book of the law was produced and published. The Babylonish captivity acted forcibly upon the religious and national sentiments of the Jews. Psalm cxxxvii., beginning with "By the rivers of Babylon," is an effusion indicative of such feeling. Psalms xiv. and liii. give the cry of the captives, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." Psalm lxix. is indited under the pressure of that calamity, with the hope of deliverance and re-establishment. "For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession." Jeremiah and Ezekiel lived and wrote in those days. The book of Esther is of that period. Daniel's book purports to be of that time, though its age is much called in question. There are several of the apocryphal writings which profess to be of that period, though with inadmissible pretensions. Still, the fact that some of the books of the Bible were written at the time in view, and that several productions of the same stamp are attributed to that period, marks it as an age of religious revival and literary activity. Ezra, we are told significantly, "was a ready scribe in the law of Moses," "a scribe," as king Artaxerxes publicly addressed him, "of the law of the God of heaven" (Ezra vii. 6, 12); and he must have acquired his title to such character in some way. The tradition current among the Jews has always been that he put the Bible record into its present shape, and the apocryphal second book of Esdras embodies this idea. "Thy law," Esdras (Ezra) is made to say, "is burnt,

therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee;" and then he asks power from God to "write all that hath been done in the world since the beginning, which were written in thy law, that men may find thy path;" and in forty days, with the aid of five scribes, he is said to have accomplished the task (2 Esdr. xiv. 21-44). The second book of Maccabees (ii. 13), which, although one of the Apocrypha, is a work of acknowledged historical value, attributes a like labour to Nehemiah. "The same things also were reported in the writings and commentaries of Neemias: and how he, founding a library, gathered together the acts of the kings and the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings concerning the holy gifts." The Hilkiah who is said to have made the discovery of the book of the law in the time of Josiah, was Ezra's grandfather (Ez. vii. 1), which affords another link in this chain of attributed authorship. Nothing permanent came of Hilkiah's discovery, the Jews remaining without any book of the law till the time of Ezra, just as if no such discovery had been made. It is an incident of a most improbable kind, and without the results attaching to a reality. Ezra may very possibly have thrown it in as a stepping-stone to the introduction and reception of his own work. It is also remarkable, as showing a family association in connection with this question of authorship, that Jeremiah, who wrote at that time, was the son of Hilkiah (Jer. i. 1).

P.—Have the historical books, which come after the book of the law, the like marks it possesses of late authorship?

Book of Joshua.

S.—Abundantly so. The book called after the name of Joshua cannot have been written by him, as it contains the record of his death (xxiv. 29, 30); after which, it is added, carrying us over the book of Judges also, "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua" (xxiv. 31). Nor could Joshua, if writing this book, have said of himself, "So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country" (vi. 27). For the astounding miracle of the arrest of time, the appeal is made to another record, namely the book of Jasher, a support Joshua certainly would not have had recourse to if he had enacted the miracle himself, as it is pretended, and was himself writing the account thereof.

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord, and he said, sun stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher" (x. 12, 13). Now the book of Jasher was not written till after the time of David (2 Sam. i. 17, 18). The phrase "unto this day" appears in iv. 9; vii. 26; viii. 28, 29; ix. 27; x. 27; xiii. 13; and xvi. 10. "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day" (xv. 63). The siege and capture of Jerusalem, here referred to, was effected by David (2 Sam. v. 6, 7) nearly four hundred years after the time of Joshua.

Book of Judges.

The book of Judges is avowedly anonymous. It relates "to a period of barbarism, ignorance, and anarchy, in which the Israelites, almost continually harassed by intestine commotions, oppressed by foreign enemies, or employed in repelling their aggressions, had little leisure to attend to the accuracy of their national annals."[1] It was, in fact, a time unsuitable, either for literary composition, or the preservation of whatever writings may already have existed. There was "in those days," as we are told, "no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (xvii. 6; xxi. 25). The bonds of society must have been too loosened to present a field for the annalist, and the people were constantly suffering from warfare and oppression. In the period of 300 years, which the book embraces, they had to serve the Syrians for eight years (iii. 8-11), and the Moabites for eighteen (iii. 12-30). Then the Philistines had to be put down (iii. 31). After this, they served the Canaanites for twenty years (iv. 1-3). They had then to deliver themselves from the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the people of the east (ch. vii. and viii). Afterwards, they were oppressed by the Philistines and Ammonites for eighteen years (x. 7-9). Ephraim and Gilead went to war (ch. xii). The Philistines ruled the land for forty years (xiii. 1). Sanguinary battles occurred between the Benjamites and the rest of Israel (ch. xx). And violent aggression was made on Jabesh-Gilead (ch. xxi). Besides

[1] Bigland's "Letters on History," 75, 76, cited by Dr Giles.

this were other foreign wars, in which the Israelites are said to have been the aggressors, and successful. The use of the phrases "unto this day," and "in those days," (i. 21, 26; xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xx. 27; xxi. 25), indicates that this is not a contemporaneous record, and the writer shows that he lived after the establishment of the kingly rule (xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 25).

Book of Ruth.

In Ruth reference is made to "the days when the judges ruled" (i. 1), showing this story to have been drawn up after the times of the judges.

Books of Samuel.

Samuel's death is recorded in the 25th chapter of the 1st book bearing his name. He, consequently, is not to be taken as the author of these books, and certainly could not have written of events that occurred after his death, and which occupy the remaining chapters, and the whole of the second book. "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life" (1 Sam. vii. 15). "The Lord sent Jerubbaal and Samuel and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies" (xii. 11). "And all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel" (xii. 18). These are passages which show the writer could not have been Samuel himself. There are, in these books also, the phrases bespeaking a bygone time; "unto this day" (1 Sam. v. 5; vi. 18; xxvii. 6; xxx. 25; 2 Sam. iv. 3; xviii. 18); and "in those days" (2 Sam. xvi. 23).

Books of Kings.

The books of Kings are anonymous, and are generally allowed to have been written after the return of the Jews from Babylon. They carry on the history to "the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachim," or towards the close of the Babylonish captivity. They contain also the phrase "unto this day," common to the previous books (1 Kings ix. 13; xii. 19; 2 Kings viii. 22; xiv. 7; xvii. 34).

P.—Are there indications that these historical books were put together by the same hand, notwithstanding that they purport to be by different people?

Unity of authorship.

S.—There are. The anachronisms, and especially the use of the terms "unto this day," "in those days," which run through them, betray a common authorship. The five books currently ascribed to Moses were but one in the Hebrew canon. The title given thereto of the "Pentateuch," and the designations of the first and last books, "Genesis" and Deuteronomy," are of Greek origin, and the division of the work into five books is probably traceable to the Septuagint version.[1] The Book of Joshua is an evident continuation of the Pentateuch. It opens—"Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass," &c. The Book of Judges is linked on in the same way, and with the like phraseology: "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass," &c. The story of Ruth is meant to be an episode in the Book of Judges. It opens thus, and with the same phrase—"Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled," &c. The first Book of Samuel is in form of a continuation of the previous narratives: "Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mount Ephraim." The second book is an accepted continuation of the first. It begins with the phrase similar to what we before observe—"Now it came to pass after the death of Saul," &c. The first of Kings is an obvious continuation, for it carries on the history of David from the point to which it had been brought in the second of Samuel. It opens thus: "Now King David was old and stricken in years." The second of Kings is, of course, a continuation of the first. It concludes the history of Ahaziah, not brought to a close in the first, and begins thus: "Then Moab rebelled against Israel." From Moses to Ezra is just a thousand years, according to the current chronology, and yet the learned find the dialect, and even the orthography, used, unaltered throughout the writings which embrace the period. Dr Wall, while labouring to maintain the integrity of the record, has to admit that "the style introduced by him (Moses) was closely imitated by all the succeeding Hebrew writers. This is very decidedly proved (he observes) by the fact that, although Hebrew continued a living language for nine hundred years after his time, yet there is scarcely more variation of orthography in the different parts of the Hebrew Scriptures than if they had been written by different authors in the same year;" and further on he speaks of "the continuation, through the subsequent Hebrew compositions, of the peculiarities which are found in the Pentateuch."[2]

Evidence of compilation.

P.—From what source could Ezra, supposing him to be the

[1] Giles' Hebrew Records, 25, 26.
[2] Inquiry into the Origin of alphabetic writing, cited by Dr Giles.

author of these books, have derived his materials? Is it to be thought that he wrote by inspiration?

S.—There is ample ground for concluding that he wrote as any other may have written, from ancient records and legends, assisted by tradition, and probably also by his imagination. There are in these books evident marks of compilation.

(1.) Through the Pentateuch there run numerous passages, interwoven with one another, some where God is referred to by the term "Elohim," and others where he is styled "Jehovah." These indicate separate narratives combined together, and frequently very inartificially.[1]

(2.) There are two accounts of the creation, one reaching from the first chapter of Genesis to the third verse of the second chapter, and the other from that point to the end of the chapter. These would seem to have been in like manner drawn from different records.

(3.) Chapter iv. ends with the birth of Seth and his son Enos. Chapter v. opens with apparently a fresh narrative, "This is the book of the generations of Adam;" and then there is an account of the creation of Adam and Eve, and of the birth of Seth and Enos, as if these facts were then stated for the first time.

(4.) In chapter vi. is the command to Noah to build the ark, and to enter it together with two of each kind of animals; and it concludes by saying, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." After this, the seventh chapter opens with an order to Noah to go into the ark, and to take with him the animals, as if no such order had been before given.

(5.) There was ten years' difference between the ages of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. xvii. 17). Abraham was seventy-five when he left Haran (xii. 4), and Sarah consequently was sixty-five. At this age she attracted the admiration of the king of Egypt, before whom Abraham, to avoid risks to himself, passed her off as his sister. The king of Egypt fell into the snare, and suffered accordingly at the hand of God (Gen. xii. 11-20). After she was ninety (xvii. 17), Abimelech, king of Gerar, took a fancy to her, Abraham having on this occasion also passed her off for his sister; and again she is

[1] Bishop Colenso, II., 175-185; IV., 19-79; V., 12-68.

protected by the interposition of God (Gen. xx. 2-13). Isaac, to save himself from peril, says that Rebekah is his sister, and Abimelech of Gerar, here called king of the Philistines, finding her to be his wife, upbraids him for the risk of incurring guilt, into which, by his misrepresentation, he had brought his people (Gen. xxvi. 1, 6-11). The circumstances are all so correspondent, that these narratives look like a multiplication of the same incident, appearing in different documents, of which a compiler made use. The introduction of the same personage Abimelech, as associated with Abraham and Isaac at an interval of nearly a hundred years, is a feature bespeaking such confusion.

(6.) Abraham was a hundred years old when a son was promised him, to the wonderment of Sarah (Gen. xvii. 17). Accordingly, Isaac is born to him in his "old age" (Gen. xxi. 2, 3). "Therefore, sprang there," it is said of this miraculous birth, "even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude" (Heb. xi. 12). Sarah dies when she was a hundred and twenty-seven years old (Gen. xxiii. 1). This brings Abraham up to a hundred and thirty-seven. After which we are told, "Then again Abraham took a wife," and by her had six sons (Gen. xxv. 1, 2). Here, also, there has probably been a misplacement of independent documents introduced by the compiler.

(7.) Exodus xix. ends with Moses going down from Mount Sinai to speak to the people. The next chapter begins with God addressing him as still on the Mount: "And God spake all these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt." After which follow the Ten Commandments. Here there must have been a transposition of materials. And then the commandments are again given forth (Deut. v. 6-21) as if they had not already been published.

(8.) "Wherefore, they that speak in proverbs, say, Come into Heshbon," &c. (Num. xxi. 27-30). This, then, is a manifest quotation from some other record; and we find its matter, given almost in the same words, in Jer. xlviii. 45, 46. Both passages may come from some common document, or else Numbers quotes from Jeremiah, which makes a palpable anachronism.

(9.) The Lord tells Samuel of Saul, and says that he is to anoint him "to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me." God accordingly points out Saul, and Samuel anoints him king (1 Sam. ix. 15-17; x. 1). But further on, Samuel says to the people, "Ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us;" after which he proceeds to ascertain who is to be the king by casting lots, and the lot indicates Saul (1 Sam. x. 19-21). These inconsistent accounts, and double action, come apparently from different sources.

(10.) "The Spirit of the Lord," we are told, "departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." His servants recommend him to employ a harpist to allay this spirit; and they name as one a son of Jesse. Saul, thereupon, sends to Jesse, saying, "Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep." David, accordingly, is brought to him, and Saul "loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer;" and at the same time David habitually played before him on the harp, and drove away the evil spirit when it came upon him (1 Sam. xvi. 14-23): After this is David's combat with Goliath. We are then introduced to him as one we had not before heard of. "Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, whose name was Jesse." He is at this time not with Saul, but tending his father's sheep. Saul seeing him go forth to the fight, asks Abner, "Whose son is this youth?" and Abner cannot tell him. And when he returns from the slaughter of the Philistine, Saul asks him, "Whose son art thou, young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite" (1 Sam. xvii. 12, 55-58). It is evident that the compiler had before him two accounts of the manner in which David came to be brought to the notice of Saul, and must have misarranged his materials.

(11.) "And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it" (1 Sam. xviii. 11). "And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin' 1 Sam. xix. 10). It is, of course, quite possible that there

may have been two such occurrences; but seeing what has been done elsewhere, the similarity of the two statements raises the suspicion that here also there has been a reduplication of event.

(12.) The thirty-first chapter of the 1st of Samuel, and 1 Chron. x. 1-12, containing an account of the circumstances of Saul's death, agree so closely in facts, arrangement, and language, that it is obvious they have been copied, the one from the other, or else taken from a common document. The same is true of Gen. xxxvi. 31-43, and 1 Chron. i. 43-54, giving the genealogy of the descendants of Esau; of 2 Kings, from the 13th verse of chapter xviii., through chapter xix., to the 19th verse of chapter xx., and the thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, and thirty-ninth chapters of Isaiah, relating to passages in the life of Hezekiah; and of Ezra ii. and Neh. vii. 6-73, respecting those who came out of the Babylonish captivity.

(13.) The Book of Kings gives the history of the rulers of Judah and Israel. The Book of Chronicles goes over the same ground as respects the rulers of Judah, and being thus superadded, affords in itself evidence of composition, with use of prior materials.

Prior records made use of.

That in the preparation of these records older documents were made use of, is rendered quite apparent by the citation of numerous such writings on which the compiler depends. The older works so cited are;

The Book of the Wars of the Lord. Num. xxi. 14.

The Book of Jasher. Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18.

The Book of the Acts of Solomon. 1 Kings xi. 41.

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. 1 Kings xiv. 19, and eighteen other places in the books of Kings; also 2 Chron. xx. 34, and xxxiii. 18.

The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. 1 Kings xiv. 29, and twelve other places in the books of Kings.

The Book of Samuel the Seer. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

The Book of Nathan the Prophet. 1 Chron. xxix. 29

The Book of Gad the Seer. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

The Chronicles of King David. 1 Chron. xxvii. 24.

The Book of Nathan the Prophet. 2 Chron. ix. 29.

The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilomite. 2 Chron. ix. 29.

The Visions of Iddo the Seer against Jeroboam the son of Nabat. 2 Chron. ix. 29.

The Book of Shemaiah the Prophet. 2 Chron. xii. 15.

The Book of Iddo the Seer concerning genealogies. 2 Chron. xii. 15.

The story of the Prophet Iddo. 2 Chron. xiii. 22.

The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 2 Chron. xvi. 11, and six other places in the same book.

The Book of Jehu. 2 Chron. xx. 34.

P.—Where are these ancient Writings? Have they been preserved?

S.—They have not.

P.—Were they inspired?

S.—No one alleges this.

P.—How could inspired records have to depend on such as were not inspired?

S.—That I cannot explain.

P.—Thank you. I will not trouble you farther on the present occasion. I feel how dangerous it is to take things for granted, on the faith of others, and without examination. I am certain that those who put this book into my hands as inspired by God, and safely conveyed to us from remote times, under his superintending care, cannot themselves have an idea how the evidence of its authorship, of its safe custody, and of its transmission, disappears at every turn, as we inquire for its existence. At a future day I will ask you to enable me to judge of the pretensions of the remaining portion of the Bible, which is called the New Testament, to be a divine record.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

II.

RENEWED CONVERSATION BETWEEN PUNDIT AND STUDENT.

Authorship of Gospels

PUNDIT.—The New Testament comes from an age sufficiently near our own to allow, possibly, of the circumstances under which it was put forth being traceable. Who were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, to whom the four gospel narratives are ascribed?

STUDENT.—Matthew and John are currently believed to have been apostles of Jesus, and Mark and Luke companions of Peter and Paul respectively.

P.—Did these persons write the gospels which bear their names?

S.—It cannot be said that they did.

P.—On what authority are these writings attributed to them?

S.—It has been thought that they may have been the authors of them, but the fact is not positively alleged. These gospels are not described as *by* Matthew, *by* Mark, &c., as would have been the case had their authorship been actually known; but only as *according* to Matthew, *according* to Mark, &c.

P.—What does that amount of assertion mean?

S.—That the narratives are such as are worthy to be attributed to these persons, and which the church may accept with as much confidence as if it were really known that they did write them.

Gospels when first known of.

P.—When were these gospels first known of among the early Christians?

S.—The first Christian writer who speaks of such works was

a bishop named Papias, who died by martyrdom about the year 164, that is, about a hundred and thirty years after the death of Jesus. He says, "Matthew composed his history in the Hebrew dialect, and every one translated it as he was able." And of Mark he says, "And John the presbyter also said this, Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but, as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history of our Lord's discourses; wherefore Mark has not erred in anything, by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not to pass by anything that he heard, or to state anything falsely in these accounts."[1] The first to whom a direct reference to the four gospels can be traced is Irenæus, who flourished about A.D. 178.[2] "There is no evidence," says Dr Giles, "that they existed earlier than the middle of the second century, for they are not named by any writer who lived before that time."[3]

P.—Can you identify the productions spoken of by these writers with the gospel records themselves.

S.—No. It is evident that the gospel we have, to which the name of Matthew is attached, is not the one adverted to by Papias, for he spoke of a writing in Hebrew, while what we have is in Greek; nor does the gospel according to Mark correspond with his description of what Mark wrote; for what we have is an orderly narrative, but what he describes is a miscellaneous collection of anecdotes, taken down from time to time as they fell from the lips of Peter. The existing gospels, with which the names of Matthew and Mark are connected, are therefore certainly not those of which Papias knew. Nor are there means for satisfying ourselves, positively, that the four gospels particularized by Irenæus are the very same that we now have.[4]

P.—May not the existing gospel according to Matthew be a translation of his Hebrew gospel?

[1] Eusebius Ecc. Hist. iii. 39.
[2] Bishop Herbert Marsh's Illustration of Hypothesis, 50, and Giles' Christian Records, 90, 92. [3] Christian Records, 56. [4] Idem, 95.

S.—It does not purport to be such, nor is there any information whatsoever to connect it with the Hebrew gospel.

P.—What claims to credibility have Papias and Irenæus left behind them?

S.—Papias gives an instance of one being raised from the dead in his time, and of another drinking deadly poison without hurt.[1] This shows him to have been a credulous person. Eusebius held him in light esteem. He said, "he was very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses; yet he was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers, urging the antiquity of the man, were carried away by a similar opinion, as, for instance, Irenæus."[2] Irenæus was equally credulous. He believed in the power of the church to raise the dead, to cast out demons, to prophesy future events, and to speak in all languages.[3] "Irenæus," says Dr Davidson, "was an uncritical and credulous man. On the authority of the elders who saw John the apostle, he believed Jesus to have taught that in the millennium vines would spring up, each having ten thousand stems, and one stem ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed would give twenty-five measures of wine, and when any of the saints shall have taken hold of one cluster, another shall cry out, I am a better cluster, take me, through me bless the Lord."[4] He had fanciful reasons for believing that there were four gospels, and could be but four; namely, because the world consisted of four quarters, because there were four chief winds, and because Ezekiel's cherubim had four different forms.[5] The evidence of Irenæus is greatly depended upon, as he had personal knowledge of Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John. But Dr Davidson points out that his acquaintance with Polycarp was when he was a mere boy, and that his recollections, after the lapse of years, would probably be confused or coloured. Dr Davidson's conclusion is, "that Irenæus had no authority for assigning the fourth Gospel to John," (this gospel being the subject of the essay), "except a vague ecclesiastical tradition. Could he have appealed to Polycarp, he would have done so."

[1] Eusebius Ec. Hist. iii. 39. [2] Idem, iii. 39. [3] Idem, v. 7.
[4] Theological Review, No. XXX., 301. [5] Idem, 304.

His references, he notices, "are vague, consisting at times of secondary, unreliable traditions. He listened to reports. If he treasured up Polycarp's words, why does he not quote them even for the disputed authenticity of the fourth gospel? The only answer is, that Polycarp had said nothing about it. Why? Because he was unacquainted with the work. How could he speak of it about 140 A.D. (the age of Justin), if Justin himself did not know of its existence?"[1]

P.—It appears, then, that the evidence is wanting just where it is most required. For about a century and a half after the events in question, there is no recognized record of them, and the first notices that are given of such records as there now are, come from credulous persons, without solid information, and whose judgment should be of no weight on any matter. Is any light thrown on the subject by other early writers?

S.—There are writings attributed to Barnabas, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas, who are called Apostolic Fathers, as they lived in the age of the apostles, and may be supposed to have had personal intercourse with them. "There is not a single sentence," Dr Giles assures us, "in all their remaining works, in which a clear allusion to the New Testament is to be found." They "do actually quote Moses, and other Old Testament writers, by name, 'Moses hath said,' 'But Moses says,' &c., in numerous passages, but we nowhere meet with the words, 'Matthew hath said in his gospel,' 'John hath said,' &c. They always quote, not the words of the evangelists, but the words of Christ himself directly, which furnishes the strongest presumption, that, though the sayings of Christ were in general vogue, yet the evangelical histories, into which they were afterwards embodied, were not then in being."[2]

Inspiration of Gospels.

P.—Do the existing gospel narratives profess to have been inspired?

S.—Inspiration is currently imputed to them, but the writings themselves contain no such avowal. Two of them, in fact, warrant a contrary conclusion, namely, that they make no such pretension. The author of the gospel according to Luke gives an account of the circumstances under which he wrote, and of

[1] Theological Review, 302, 304. [2] Christian Records, 52.

his means of information. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a description of those things which have been brought to fulfilment in us, even as they, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word, have handed down to us; it seemed good to me also, following all accurately from the beginning, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (i. 1-4). I adopt here an amended translation by Dr Giles.[1] The writer in Luke does not say, as do those of the Old Testament, "Thus saith the Lord," but tells us that he has written this account of his own mind and accord, as it "seemed good" to him; and upon materials such as "many" others had used for a like purpose; namely, the statements of credible witnesses. This history, therefore, is avowedly of human authorship, just as any ordinary history would be. The writer of the gospel according to John, appeals, in like manner, not to inspiration, but to credible testimony, and this simply his own. "This is the disciple," he says, "which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true." Who he is he does not say, save that he comes forward as one of the apostles, namely one "whom Jesus loved, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee;" nor is it explained who the "we" are who were so satisfied with his "testimony." The passage, in fact, has the appearance of coming from one who was not himself the author. Then he shows that he had made his own selection of the matters recorded by him, and might have communicated much more had he been so minded; clearly therefore implying that he was not acting under the dictation or special instruction of God. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (xxi. 20-25). This in itself is hyperbolical language, not having the character of inspired truth. When we find, out of four narratives, all of the same stamp, and put forth for the same purpose, two laying no claim to inspiration, but admittedly drawn from mere human resources, it is fair to conclude that the other two, which equally

[1] Christian Records, 97, 98.

advance no claim to inspiration, are, in like manner, of purely human origin.

Apocryphal writings.

P.—Luke refers to the existence of many other narratives such as his own. Are there indications of other writings, beyond those which make up the New Testament, being current among the early Christians, and if so, what was thought of them?

S.—There are abundant notices of such writings, and some of them appear to have been accepted with as much respect as those embodied in the New Testament. It was the habit of eminent teachers of christianity to address epistles to the various gatherings or churches, which were read to them and interchanged between them. The epistles ascribed to Paul are of this stamp, and were thus read and circulated. "I charge you," the writer says, "by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren" (1 Thess. v. 27). "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. iv. 16). In like manner, of the apostolic fathers, Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians, Polycarp of Smyrna to the Philippians, and Ignatius of Antioch to various churches of Asia Minor, and these communications were circulated to other churches.[1] Clement refers to the writings of the "Blessed Judith" in the same line that he alludes to those of the "Blessed Paul," and he cites the "Book of Wisdom" with as much respect as the epistles incorporated in the New Testament.[2] Dr Giles informs us that "the apostolical fathers quote sayings of Christ which are not found in our gospels," and which consequently came from other sources; and he instances one such put forward by Barnabas, namely, "Those who wish to see me, and to touch my kingdom, must be contrite and suffering and so take hold of me." He also tells us that Papias mentions the Gospel of the Hebrews, "with quite as much respect as those of Matthew and Mark,[3] (*i.e.*, those gospels of Matthew and Mark he describes). Dennis, Bishop of Corinth, who lived in the latter half of the second century, in a letter addressed by him to the Romans, speaks of the Romans having written to the Corinthians a letter

[1] Histoire du Canon, par E. Reuss, 22, 23. [2] Idem, 26, 27.
[3] Christian Records, 52, 53, 65.

which had been read out on Sunday, as one written formerly by Clement had been.[1] Justyn Martyr, who wrote about the year 140, considered the Sibyl, and the writings of one Hystaspes, to be as much inspired as the Old Testament. He says, the "Memoirs of the Apostles" were read out in the Sunday meetings, and that their title to reception consisted in the support they derived from the prophecies of the Old Testament, the fulfilment of which they recount. He does not mention the existing gospels by name, and gives particulars not appearing in them, and which he consequently must have had from some other source. For example, he never takes account of the genealogy of Jesus as associated with Joseph, which is the statement of genealogy in Matthew and Luke, but relies on that of Mary as derived from David, which is not given in the received gospels; he particularizes that the wise men, who, in the gospels, are said to have come from the East, came from that part of the East known as Arabia; he says that Jesus was born in a cave near the village of Bethlehem; that when he was baptized, the river Jordan gave forth a miraculous fire; that Jesus worked as a carpenter in the construction of ploughs and other agricultural implements, and that all the disciples denied their Lord after his resurrection. He also gives various sayings of Jesus, which are not in the received gospels.[2] Dr Giles further points out that Justin particularizes that the ass's foal on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem was tied to a vine outside the village; that at his trial the soldiers mocked him, placing him "on a tribunal," and saying, "Give judgment for us;" and that one of the utterances of Jesus was, "In whatsoever things I shall apprehend you, in those also will I judge you," matters none of which are in the current gospels.[3] A great number of spurious works were put forth in the second century, as if productions of the previous century.[4] Irenæus cited the Epistle of Clement and the pastor of Hermas.[5] "No one," says Giles, "ventures to say that the work of Hermas is genuine."[6] Clement of Alexandria, one of the great theologians of the second century, accepted as scripture the Pastor of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and various other Apocrypha, such as the

[1] Reuss, 43, 44. [2] Reuss, 51-59. [3] Christian Records, 79.
[4] Reuss, 75. [5] Reuss, 112. [6] Christian Records, 55.

Apocalypse and preaching of Peter, the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Egyptians, the Traditions of the Apostle Matthias, and a pretended work of Paul, in which the Sibyl and the prophecy of Hystaspes were recommended.[1] The Gospel according to the Egyptians is mentioned by Origen and quoted from by Clement of Alexandria.[2] There are accounts of the Apocryphal Gospels, carrying their number to fifty and upwards. There remain now but seven.[3] Besides Justyn Martyr, Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian also makes use of them.[4] There were, furthermore, thirty-six Apocryphal Acts, and twelve spurious Apocalypses.[5]

P.—Are there traces of the gospels being derived from any prior writings, so as to interfere with their title to be accepted as original and independent documents ?

Correspondence of synoptical gospels.

S.—The gospel according to John stands out distinct from the others, and has to be considered separately. The other three occupy the same range of narration, grounded on closely corresponding materials. Out of the many speeches that must have fallen from Jesus, and the many miracles said to have been wrought by him, they so frequently make the same selection as to demonstrate unity of action, from whatever cause proceeding. They also contain numerous passages so closely resembling one another, in respect of matter, arrangement, and language, that it is obvious the writers must have copied from one another, or else from some common document. But as they also at times differ seriously, the presumption is that they made use of surrounding materials at their discretion, sometimes following one of the earlier narratives, and sometimes another. Here are instances where it is plain they had a common document in use.

Matt. ix.	Mark ii.	Luke v.
2. Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.	5. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.	20. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.
3. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.	6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts.	21. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins but God alone ?
	7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins but God only ?	
4. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ?	8. And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?	22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts ?
5. For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and walk ?	9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk ?	23. Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ?
6. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.	10. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy),	24. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto
	11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.	thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

[1] Reuss, 121. [2] Christian Records, 274.
[3] Origin and Hist. of the Books of the New Testament. By Professor C. E. Stowe, 186, 187.
[4] Stowe, 218. [5] Mackay's Rise and Progress of Christianity, 11.

7. And he arose, and departed to his house.

12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all.

25. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Matt. xxi.

23. And when he was come into the temple the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority.

24. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which, if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

27. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them,

Mark xi.

27. And as he was walking in the temple there came to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28. And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? Answer me.

31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32. But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering

Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Matt. xxiv.

9. . . . And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

15. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16. Then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains:

17. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house.

18. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20. But pray ye that your flight be not in winter, neither on the sabbath day:

21. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.

Mark xiii.

13. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15. And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house.

16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25. Behold, I have told you before.

29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30. . . . And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21. And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe him not:

22. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

23. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory.

27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Matt. xxiv.

32. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth his leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.

33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

34. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.

35. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark xiii.

28. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

29. So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

30. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.

31. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Luke xxi.

29. . . . Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

33. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark i.

21. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

Luke iv.

31. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath day.

32. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

33. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

24. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

25. And Jesus rebuked him saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

34. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

"The comparison," says Giles, who collates these passages, "would be far more striking, if the extracts were given in the original Greek."[1] Bishop Herbert Marsh has given the subject a thorough examination, the results of which fill a volume. He says, "we meet with several examples in which all three Gospels verbally coincide: but these examples are not very numerous. The examples of verbal agreement between St Matthew and St Mark are very numerous, and several of them are very long and remarkable. On the other hand," there is not "a single instance of verbal agreement between St Matthew and St Mark," where the order of arrangement differs. "In no instance does St Mark fail to agree verbally with St Matthew, where St Luke agrees verbally with St Matthew. There are

[1] Christian Records, 266.

frequent instances of verbal agreement between St Mark and St Luke: though they are neither so numerous nor so long, as those between St Matthew and St Mark. Upon the whole, the examples of verbal disagreement between St Mark and St Luke are much more numerous than the examples of agreement. In several sections St Mark's text agrees in one place with that of St Matthew, in another with that of St Luke. St Matthew and St Luke invariably relate the same thing in different words, except in the passages where both agree at the same time with St Mark."[1] "These phenomena," he observes, "are inexplicable," on any other supposition than that these evangelists "copied the one from the other; or that all three drew from a common source. The notion of an absolute independence in respect to the composition of our three first Gospels, is no longer tenable."[2]

Relative support of Gospels.

P.—What can have been the object in having the same narratives told in the same language by different persons? Why, if God designed to communicate an inspired history to mankind, might not the task have been committed to one selected person, according to the method of the Old Testament, as, say Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ezra, and the several prophets?

S.—This is not apparent. Ordinarily, a combination of evidence is a support to a history.

P.—Then that would be to rely on a human resource, and not on divine authority, would it not?

S.—It would.

P.—Do these evangelists cite one another by name so as to sustain each other?

S.—They do not.

P.—Do they agree with each other throughout their facts and details?

S.—They do not. Matthew and Mark are generally in pretty close correspondence. Luke's narrative resembles their's in its framework and character, but he often differs in his details. John's is altogether an independent statement, which cannot be brought into comparison, or accord, with the earlier gospels.

Gospel according to John.

P.—In what respect does John's gospel stand out so distinctly from the others?

[1] Dissertation on Three First Gospels, 150, 151. [2] Idem, 2, 4.

S.—The first three gospels, as I have pointed out, are evidently to some extent based upon a prior common record. This feature does not belong to John's gospel. He, at a later day, and as dogmatic teaching had advanced, has formed his own idea of the being and character of Jesus, and he has shaped his incidents and statements to accord with his conception. The Rev. J. J. Tayler is one of those who has made a close study of this subject. He notices that in the earlier gospels Jesus figures as one instructing by parables, arresting attention by a constant succession of miracles, and seizing on passing incidents to enforce his doctrines; while in the fourth gospel he is put forward, prominently, as the incarnate word of God, and Messiah of the Jews, prone to disputation, and disseminating his views in formal sustained discourses maintained in continuous flow. The first three are, in fact, commonly distinguished from the fourth by the term synoptical, which means that they consist of historic details forming together a comprehensive narrative, while the character of the fourth is that it is dogmatic, or composed with a view to doctrinal instruction. Mr Tayler also adverts to the numerous points wherein the fourth gospel is at issue with the other three in its statements, and says, "John's is not so much another, as in one sense a different gospel. It is impossible to harmonise the two forms of the narrative: one excludes the other. If the three first gospels represent Christ's public ministry truly, the fourth cannot be accepted as simple, reliable history. If we assume the truth of the fourth, we must reject, on some fundamental points, the evidence of the three first."[1]

Authorship of John's gospel.

P.—Certainly the number of the witnesses does not seem to add to the weight of the evidence. You have shown that we have not Matthew's gospel, as that was written in Hebrew, nor Mark's, as what he wrote was a collection of unconnected anecdotes and sayings, and that Luke got his statements at second hand. Supposing the apostle John to be the author of the fourth gospel, would not his testimony, though standing singly, be more worthy of acceptance than the statements appearing in the writings of the other three who are unknown? What, then, is the title of the author of the fourth gospel to be considered the apostle John?

[1] On the Fourth Gospel, 1-7.

S.—This gospel professes to have been written by one of the apostles. The writer is described therein as "the disciple whom Jesus loved, which also leaned on his breast at supper;" and, according to tradition, this favoured disciple was John. But his pretension to be the apostle does not stand the test of examination. Papias says, "If I met with any one who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders. What was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip; what by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord. What was said by Aristion, and by the Presbyter John, disciples of the Lord; for I do not think that I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those that are still surviving."[1] The books to which Papias refers had declaredly less influence over him than the sayings of the apostles as repeated to him by those who said they had heard them. Necessarily, these writings could not have been oracles accepted as inspired. Neither, it is presumable, could they have been matured and well arranged productions, by credible persons, demanding attention, of the form of the gospels we now have. What Matthew and Mark wrote, Papias has mentioned, but he says nothing of any writing by John, though John is one of those named by him with whose sayings he sought to become acquainted. He refers, it will be observed, to two Johns, one as "a disciple of our Lord," and the other as a "presbyter," or elder. We have three sets of writings bearing the name of John, that is the gospel, certain epistles, and the Apocalypse. The 2d and 3d of the epistles profess to be by an "elder," but their genuineness is much disputed. Most critics agree that the other writings cannot be by the same hand. "The writer of the Apocalypse," observes Tayler, "has a mind essentially objective. He realises his conceptions through vision. He transports himself into an imaginary world, and speaks as if it were constantly present to his sense. His whole book is pervaded with the glow, and breathes the vehement and fierce spirit of the old Hebrew prophecy, painting vividly to the mental eye, but never appealing directly to the spiritual perception of the soul. When we turn to the fourth Gospel, we find ourselves at once in another atmosphere of thought, full

[1] Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. iii. 39.

of deep yearnings after the unseen and eternal, ever soaring into a region which the imagery of things visible cannot reach; even in its descriptions marked by a certain contemplative quietness, as if it looked at things without from the retired depths of the soul within."[1] "But little of the genuine mind of Jesus," observes Strauss, "is to be met with in his book (the Apocalypse). It is written throughout in the fiery and vengeful spirit of Elijah, repudiated by Jesus as foreign to him?"[2] It might be consistently ascribed to him who was accounted "a son of thunder" (Mark iii. 17), and who wished to have fire called down from heaven to avenge a mere inhospitality (Luke ix. 54), but clearly belongs not to the loving character on which the writer of the fourth gospel and the epistles of John prided himself. In judging of correspondence of style, Tayler comes to the conclusion that "there is the highest probability that the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle were written by the same hand."[3] But it is far otherwise when the Apocalypse enters into the comparison. "The language of the two writers," he observes, "is as different as their characteristic modes of conception and thought. The style of the Apocalypse is perfectly barbarous—Hebrew done into Greek, with a constant violation of the most ordinary laws of construction. The Greek of the Fourth Gospel, without being classical, is still fluent, perspicuous, and grammatical."[4]

The discussion is traceable so far back as the time of Dionysius, in the year 260 to 268. He says, "To attentive observers, it will be obvious that there is one and the same complexion and character in the Gospel and Epistle." Adding, that "we may notice how the phraseology of the Gospel and the Epistle differs from the Apocalypse. For the former are written not only irreprehensibly, as it regards the Greek language, but are most elegant in diction in the arguments and the whole structure of the style. It would require much to discover any barbarism or solecism, or any odd peculiarity of expression at all in them." And then, adverting to the writer of the Apocalypse, he says, "But I perceive that his dialect and language is not very accurate Greek; but that he uses barbarous idioms, and in some places solecisms."[5] And

[1] The Fourth Gospel, 9, 10. [2] The New Life of Jesus, I. 380.
[3] The Fourth Gospel, 54. [4] Idem, 11. [5] Eusebius, Ec. Hist., vii. 25.

such has been the opinion of qualified critics to this day. The gospel and the epistle may be by the same author, but the gospel and the Apocalypse cannot be so, unless the writer so changed his style and dialect as to make it no longer recognizable, as what he once used. The Apocalypse purports to be the work of John, and in the absence of a specification to the contrary, the natural presumption would be that thereby the apostle John was intended. Such certainly was the judgment of the early Christians. Justin Martyr says, "Among us, too, a certain man named John, one of the apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, prophesied that the believers in our Christ should fulfil a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that after that there would be the general and final resurrection and judgment of all men together,"[1]— a passage referred to by Eusebius, where he speaks of Justin, "plainly calling" the Apocalypse "the work of the apostle."[2] Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, Tayler informs us, held the same view, therein representing "the strong unquestioned tradition of their own time," Irenæus and Origen, however, recognising the apostle as equally the author of the gospel.[3] "Hardly," says Tayler, referring to the Apocalypse, "one book of the New Testament has such a list of historical witnesses marked by name on its behalf."[4] So far, then, from having any solid assurance whereupon to accept the fourth gospel as the work of the apostle John, the evidence preponderates the other way. If the apostle wrote such a gospel, Papias should have known thereof, and should have spoken thereof, when he spoke of the writings of Matthew and Mark; and if the Apocalypse is to be attributed to the apostle, then, by the laws of criticism, the gospel cannot also have been his production.

The Paschal controversy.

What is called the paschal controversy affords further evidence against this gospel being the production of the apostle John. The question was whether the easter festival should be kept on the day of the Jewish passover, that is, the 14th Nisan, when, pursuant to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus held with his disciples the last supper, on which occurrence the Christian ordinance of the eucharist is founded, or on the succeeding sunday when he rose from the dead. The

[1] Tayler's Fourth Gospel, 31. [2] Ec. Hist., iv. 18.
[3] Tayler's Fourth Gospel, 36, 37. [4] Idem, 41.

Asiatic christians, including the early Jewish converts, contended for the first position, and the Romish church for the second. Polycarp, between A.D. 156 and 168, visited Rome, and, on behalf of the Asiatics, had a friendly disputation on the subject with Anicetus, the bishop of Rome, and relied, as authorities on his side, on the example of "John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles." Now, in the gospel attributed to John, the last supper is stated to have been held before the passover, namely, on the 13th Nisan, and it contains no account of that distribution of bread and wine by Jesus to his disciples, on which the eucharist is based; and had this gospel been then extant, and received as the work of the apostle John, it is impossible but that the bishop of Rome should have referred thereto as overthrowing the support from John, depended upon by the Asiatic representative. The incident is related in a letter by Irenæus, from the Asiatic side, addressed to Victor, the then bishop of Rome, as preserved by Eusebius. The gospel of John, in effect, is considered to have been got up at a later day, after the disputation between Polycarp and Anicetus, in view, among other matters, of sustaining the Romish side in this controversy.[1] It is apparent from his speaking of Caiaphas, as the "high priest that same year" (xi. 49; xviii. 13), as if the office were one filled annually, that the writer, whoever he may have been, was not one in contact with Jewish institutions, or familiar therewith.

Evidences of late authorship of gospels.

P. Are there indications in the gospels themselves of their having been written at times removed from those of the events recorded in them?

S. There are some such indications.

(1.) According to Matthew xi. 2, 3, John the Baptist, when in prison, sends two of his disciples to ascertain whether Jesus was the expected Messiah. On this Jesus holds a discourse, in which (v. 12) he is made to say, "And *from the days* of John the Baptist *until now* the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." This involves a lapse of time from the days of John, of which Jesus, who was of the same period, could not have been sensible; nor had there been any opening for the display of a strenuous desire to

[1] Strauss' New Life of Jesus, I. 97, 98; Tayler on 4th Gospel, 100-104.

press into the recently announced kingdom, the nature of which was not then understood.

(2.) In John i. 15-18, a testimony is attributed to John the Baptist of Jesus, which he could not have given, as it embraces what was as yet unrealized. He says, "Of his fulness *have all we received,* and grace for grace;" whereas Jesus having still to perform his work, no such fulness could have been at that time imparted.

(3.) "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 38). The same symbolical use of the word "cross" appears also in Matt. xvi. 24; Mark x. 21; Luke ix. 23; xiv. 27. The expression could not have fallen from the lips of Jesus before his own suffering on the cross had given it significance.

(4.) The word "gospel," or "good tidings," could not have been employed by Jesus till, by his expiation of sin, the happy news of the opening of the way of salvation for sinners could be announced. Dr Giles, from whom I derive these instances, says the term was not in use till the end of the second century.[1]

(5.) One of the disciples is designated Simon Peter. "Peter" is from a Greek word signifying a stone. Greek was not understood in Galilee, the language of the people being a corrupt form of the Chaldee. The proper term for them to have understood would have been "Cephas," which is employed but in one passage in the four gospels (John i. 42), whereas "Petros," or Peter, appears, it has been calculated, in ninety-seven.

(6.) The demoniac found in the country of the Gadarenes is possessed by a multitude of devils, who say their name is "Legion" (Mark v. 9; Luke viii. 30). "The four gospels," observes Giles, "are written in Greek, and the word legion is Latin; but in Galilee and Perea, the people spoke neither Latin nor Greek, but Hebrew, or a dialect of it. The word *legion* would be perfectly unintelligible to the disciples of Christ, and to almost everybody in the country, as much so as the English word 'regiment' or 'brigade.' How then can we account for the Latin word *legion* thus occurring in a vernacular dialogue between men of Galilee and Perea? This

[1] Christian Records, 169-174.

question may be answered thus. The compiler of the Evangelic records lived at a time when the world was wholly subdued by the Roman arms, and every city and country within its wide boundaries was witnessing the discipline and haughtiness of the Roman legions. The word *legion* was then used, as we use the word *host*, to describe a large indefinite number, and the compilers so used it, not reflecting that in the time of Christ such usage was unknown, because the country was not then reduced into the tranquillity of a subject province."[1]

(7.) "And upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. xvi. 18). "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church" (Matt. xviii. 17). Christian bodies could not have been thus designated, especially as referred to in the last of these passages, until their growth and consolidation gave significancy to the term, and, in fact, brought it into existence.

P.—You conclude that the close correspondence which exists between the first three evangelists, running through frequent and lengthened passages, shows that they must have had before them some earlier record from which they severally extracted materials. Are there any other indications of the same sort?

Traces of dependence on earlier records.

S.—There are. Their disagreements, equally as well as their agreements, make it apparent that they must have followed earlier sources of information, which in these instances were divergent. There are, for example, two accounts of the annunciation of the divine origin of Jesus, one made by an angel to his mother before her pregnancy, and the other through a dream to her husband after her condition had become manifest. There are two genealogies of Jesus which differ altogether from each other, one being in the regal line of Solomon, and the other in the unregal line of his brother Nathan; and that given by Luke is thrust in out of place after we hear of Jesus arriving at maturity. One narrative has the flight of the family, after the birth of Jesus, from Jerusalem to Egypt, and thence the journey to Galilee, while another excludes such flight, keeping them in Judea till they went finally to Galilee. There are accounts of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the wilderness of Judea, at a time

[1] Christian Records, 197.

when, according to another account, he was performing a miracle in Cana of Galilee. There are two accounts of the miraculous feeding of multitudes, which evidently relate to one and the same incident, given merely with variation as to numbers. During the last six months of his life, Jesus, according to one set of representations, was ministering in Galilee, but according to another statement he was at this same time in Judea. Pursuant to one account he made his way from Galilee to Jerusalem through Samaria, that is by a line west of the Jordan; pursuant to another, he crossed the Jordan and prosecuted his journey through the regions east of that river. There are double accounts of his purification of the temple, and of his undergoing anointment at a feast, one statement placing these events early in his public career, the other at the close thereof. The duration of his ministry is by one evangelist shown to have occupied more than two years, and to have embraced several journeys from Galilee to Judea, and by the others but a portion of a year, with but one such journey. There are conflicting descriptions of the circumstances under which Matthew, Peter and Andrew, and James and John, were called to the apostleship, and under which Judas betrayed his Lord and came by his retributive end. There are representations of various appearances of Jesus after his death, the particulars of which are so discordant that each one account is made impossible by some other account. And the time occupied with such manifestations is by two evangelists limited to a single day, while the others extend it to several, and one historian to as many as forty days. Variations so numerous, and of so marked a nature, could not have occurred had the writers been drawing from personal sources of information. They must have trusted to prior and independent narratives, of which Luke shows there were already "many" before he put his history together, or else have followed floating traditions, or even the promptings of their own imaginations in search of what might have the most telling effect.

Strauss' judgment on this subject is thus expressed:—"Their narratives (those of the four evangelists) throughout were to be considered not the accounts of eye-witnesses, but only fragmentary notes recorded by men who lived at a distance from the events, and who, though they penned down

many authentic notices and speeches, collected also all sorts of legendary traditions, and embellished them in part by inventions of their own. As regards the Gospel of John the conclusion of modern criticism is to the effect that the famous enrichment which it brings to the evangelical history is only apparent and not real, that all that it contains of a really historical character is taken from the older gospels, and that all that goes beyond this is either pure invention or modification."[1]

Book of Enoch.

It is furthermore clear that the Book of Enoch, a work believed to have been put forth about fifty years before Christ, has been freely used by several of the writers of the New Testament. Jude openly cites this production, mistaking it as that of the genuine Enoch himself. He says (14, 15), "and Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." The passage in the Book of Enoch stands thus. "Behold, he comes with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against him." Bishop Colenso has compared a good many passages of the New Testament with this Book of Enoch, demonstrating that the one have been taken from the other. The following are samples:—

Enoch ix. 3—"Thou hast made all things, and all things are open and manifest before thee." Heb. iv. 13—"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Enoch xii. 5—Angels are described who "have deserted the lofty sky, and their holy everlasting station, who have been polluted with women, and have done as the sons of men do, by taking to themselves wives, and who have been greatly corrupted on the earth." And the sentence on these is (x. 15, 16), "Bind them for seventy generations underneath the

[1] New Life of Jesus, I. 125, 187.

earth, even to the day of judgment and of consummation, until the judgment, which will last for ever, be completed. Then shall they be taken away into the lowest depths of the fire in torments, and in confinement shall they be shut up for ever." Jude 6, 7—"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." 2 Pet. ii. 4—"God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

Enoch xxxviii. 2—"It would have been better for them if they had never been born." Matt. xxvi. 24—"It had been good for that man, if he had not been born."

Enoch xlv. 3—"In that day shall the Elect One sit upon a throne of glory, and shall choose their conditions and countless habitations." Matt. xxv. 31—"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." John xiv. 2—"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Enoch xlv. 5—"I will change the face of the heaven: I will bless it and illuminate it for ever. I will also change the face of the earth: I will bless it and cause those whom I have elected to dwell upon it." 2 Pet. iii. 13—"Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Enoch l. 2—"The day of their salvation has approached." Luke xxi. 28—"Your redemption draweth nigh." Rom. xiii. 11—"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Enoch l. 4—"And all the righteous shall become angels in heaven." Mark xii. 25—"They are as the angels which are in heaven."

Enoch l. 4—"Their countenance shall be bright with joy." Matt. xiii. 43—"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Enoch liii. 1-6—"I beheld a deep valley burning with fire, and there my eyes beheld the instruments which they were making, fetters of iron without weight. Then I enquired of the angel of peace, who proceeded with me, saying, For whom are these fetters and instruments prepared? He replied, These are prepared for the host of Azazeel, that they may be delivered over and adjudged to the lowest condemnation, and that their angels may be overwhelmed with hurled stones, as the Lord of spirits has commanded. Michael and Gabriel, Raphael and Phanuel, shall be strengthened in that day, and shall then cast them into a furnace of blazing fire, that the Lord of Spirits may be avenged of them for their crimes; because they became ministers of Satan, and seduced those who dwell upon earth." Matt. xiii. 41, 42—"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Matt. xxv. 40, 41—"And the King shall say, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Enoch lxi. 4—"The word of his mouth shall destroy all the sinners and all the ungodly, who shall perish at his presence." 2 Thess. i. 9—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. ii. 8—"That wicked, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Enoch lxi. 8—"Trouble shall come upon them, as upon a woman in travail." 1 Thess. v. 3—"Then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child."

Enoch lxi. 9—"And trouble shall seize them, when they shall behold this son of woman sitting upon the throne of his glory." Matt. xix. 28—"In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory." Matt. xxv. 31—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

Enoch lxxxii. 4, 5—"I saw in a vision heaven purifying, and snatched away; and, falling to the earth, I saw likewise the earth absorbed by a great abyss." Enoch xcii. 17—"The former heaven shall depart and pass away, a new heaven shall appear." Heb. ix. 23—"It was therefore necessary that the

patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Matt. v. 18—"Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one title shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." In Matt. xxiv. 35; Mark xiii. 31; Luke xvi. 17; xxi. 33, the like anticipation of the passing away of heaven and earth appears. 2 Pet. iii. 10, 13—"The day of the Lord will come; in the which the heavens shall pass away, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Enoch xciii. 6—xciv. 6—"Woe to those who build up iniquity and oppression. Woe to those who build up their houses with crime! Woe to you who are rich! for in your riches have ye trusted, but from your riches you shall be removed. You are destined to the day of darkness, and to the day of the great judgment. Woe to you who recompense your neighbour with evil! for you shall be recompensed according to your works. Woe to you, ye false witnesses, you who aggravate iniquity! for you shall suddenly perish." Matt. xxiii. 23—"Woe unto you—hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." (Also Luke xi. 42.) Matt. xxiii. 14—"Woe unto you—hypocrites! for ye devour widow's houses." Luke vi. 24—"Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." James v. 1, 3—"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." 2 Pet. ii. 4, 17—"Reserved unto judgment. To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." Rom. xii. 17—"Recompense to no man evil for evil." Matt. xvi. 27—"Then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Also Rom. ii. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 14.) Matt. v. 11—Blessed are ye, when men . . . shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Matt. xviii. 7—"Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Also Luke xvii. 1.)

The resemblances above traced out affect passages in the four Gospels, those in Matthew being numerous; in five of the Epistles attributed to Paul, namely, in Romans, 1st and 2d

Thessalonians, 2d Timothy, and Hebrews; in the 2d Epistle of Peter; and the Epistles of James and Jude. The correspondence of Enoch with the Apocalypse is so remarkable as to warrant the conclusion that the one revelation has been framed upon the model of the other. We find in Enoch, with more or less identity of idea and language, the praises and invocation of God appearing in Rev. iv. 11; xv. 3; xvii. 14; xix. 16; the binding of Satan and the casting him into the lake of fire in Rev. xx. 2, 10; the throne in heaven, and the personage sitting on it, with the voice or utterance of the cherubim, and the ten thousand times ten thousand around him, serving him day and night, in Rev. iv. 2, 8; v. 11; vii. 15; the tree of life, and the elect partaking of its fruit, having length of life added to them, with absence of sorrow and pain, in Rev. ii. 7; xxi. 4; xxii. 2, 14; the great multitude of the saved before the throne, in Rev. vii. 9; the new heaven and earth with the passing away of the old, in Rev. xxi. 1; the one whose head is white like wool, in Rev. i. 14; the blood of the righteous ascending to the presence of the Lord, with the promise of judgment, when his patience should cease to endure, in Rev. vi. 9, 10; the judge seated on his throne, the opening of the book of life, the dead, including those lying in destruction and hell, given up for judgment, in Rev. xx. 11-13; the joy of saints, when at their supplication the blood of the righteous is remembered by the Lord, in Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1, 2; the fountain of righteousness where those athirst are satisfied, in Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 6; xxii. 1; xxii. 17; the lake of fire, and the binding of evil spirits in chains, because of their deception of mankind, in Rev. xix. 20; xx. 1-3, 10; the beast rising out of the sea, and the other beast coming out of the earth, in Rev. xiii. 1, 11; the seven spirits before the throne in Rev. i. 4; iii. 1; iv. 5; v. 6; the praise of every power in heaven, in Rev. v. 13; the destruction from (the sword of) his mouth, in Rev. i. 16; ii. 16; xix. 15, 21; the everlasting dwelling of the saints with the Son of man, in Rev. vii. 15; xxi. 3; the fear and debasement of the kings and rulers of the earth, in Rev. vi. 15; xix. 18; the seraphic beings who watch round the throne day and night, in Rev. iv. 8; the falling (as dead) before the Lord, and being raised up again, in Rev. i. 17; and the star falling from heaven, in Rev. viii. 10; ix. 1.

"These," says Bishop Colenso, speaking of all the collected extracts, "are only a few instances of the influence which this remarkable book seems to have exercised upon the minds of devout men in the first age of Christianity."[1]

Book of Acts.

P. By whom was the book of Acts written, and is it to be considered inspired?

S. The book of Acts purports to be the work of one who had written a "former treatise," addressed to one Theophilus. This points to the writer of the gospel according to Luke as the author, as his work is inscribed to Theophilus. In writing the gospel, the author showed that he drew his materials from ordinary sources, and, therefore, not from inspiration; and in the Acts he does not allege that he has been inspired. The book consists of incidents of contemporaneous history, and therefore does not present itself in the character of an inspired oracle.

The Epistles.

P. Were the Epistles inspired? And are they authenticated as such correspondence usually is?

S. They are mostly of the character of occasional epistles, addressed to particular congregations, or even individuals, as any such communications might be. It was the habit of eminent teachers thus to exhort and instruct bodies located elsewhere, whom they could not address personally, as I have already mentioned, and none of these letters but those incorporated in the Bible are considered inspired. Why these in particular should be looked upon as of a different stamp, and be viewed as divine, and not merely human correspondence, is of course questionable. The Epistle to the Hebrews, and the three ascribed to John, are anonymous. The others all declare the names of the writers. Most of them come from Paul. In his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, and his Epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, he certifies that he writes in his own hand. "Ye see," he says to the Galatians, "how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." In his 2d Epistle to the Thessalonians he says that his "salutation with his own hand, is the token in every epistle." The epistles, at least those of Paul, appear to have been properly authenticated.

P. Have the actual epistles been preserved?

[1] Pentateuch and Joshua, IV. 309-323.

S. They have not. We have only what purport to be copies of them.

P. Do any of the early Christian writers speak of having seen the actual authenticated epistles?

S. They make no such statement.

P. Can you account for the authenticated epistles not having been preserved, consistently with the importance attached by Paul to the fact of their authentication?

S I cannot.

P. If these epistles were really inspired by God, why should Paul have been so particular as to the circumstance that they bore his signature? He was a mere man, was he not, who had to be himself addressed by God equally as the others?

S. It is impossible to explain this. It looks, certainly, as if what God wrote was considered to require a human voucher to give it currency.

P. And after all, those vouchers were lost!

S. So it appears.

Collection of Epistles incomplete.

P. Is the collection of the epistles, of the stamp of these which were to be preserved as God's communications to man, complete? And who was charged with making the collection?

S. The letters would certainly have to be sought out from among the different communities to whom they had been addressed, but there is no trace of any one having been charged with such an office, nor can it be said how the collection was made. Several of the letters have undoubtedly been omitted, apparently from defect of collection. For example, there is one recited, and it may be copied in full, in Acts xv. 22-31, which is not in the collection of the so called sacred epistles, and this distinctly purports to have been inspired. Then there is a letter referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. v. 9, as previously written by him, which is wanting. There is another he speaks of in 2 Cor. ii. 3-11 and vii. 8-12 which is also wanting. And in Col. iv. 16, he mentions a letter of his to the Laodiceans, which was to be read publicly in the church, and which is not extant.

P. In what way is the letter recited in Acts xv. shown to have been inspired?

S. It is so declared. The letter conveyed certain injunctions, which were said to have been adopted as "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (the writers).

P. Surely, if the authority of the Holy Ghost could be pleaded for these instructions, they did not require also the support of the men who sent the letter?

S. One would think not.

Inspiration of Paul's Epistles.

P. Do any of Paul's epistles profess to be supported by divine authority?

S. Apparently all of them, except in certain passages where he says, discriminatively, that he relies on his own judgment, rather than on divine command. These are to be found in 1 Cor. vii. 6, 10, 12, 25; 2 Cor. viii. 8; xi. 17, where he states he speaks "by permission and not of commandment;" and then of one command says, "not I (issue it) but the Lord;" and of another, that he gives it, and "not the Lord." On a certain subject he says, "I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment." In other respects he declares broadly, "Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 2); "We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "We command and exhort you by our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 6, 12); "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37).

P. How could Paul distinguish in the way you instance between what God had imparted to him, and what sprang from his own thoughts? Surely it must have been through his thoughts that God must have communicated with him, and how was he to know an inspired from an uninspired thought?

S. I cannot tell you. Paul himself was not always able to trace the source of his thoughts with absolute certainty. On the subject of marriage, he says, in respect of widows re-marrying, "But she is happier if she so abide (unmarried), after my judgment; and I think also that I have the spirit of God" (1 Cor. vii. 40).

Formation of Canon.

P. There appear to have been in existence some half hundred gospel narratives, and any amount of doctrinal epistles which the leaders of christianity may have thought proper to address to the different congregations. Out of such a mass of materials, all of a similar purport and stamp, how was it to be known which had come by inspiration from God, and which were of mere human authorship?

S. There were no means of an assured and certain nature for exercising such discrimination. The acts of inspiration had not left a trace of the operation behind them. The inspired men were no longer in being. There was nothing known, of a positive sort, whereby to connect the Gospels, the book of Acts, or the Apocalypse, with any imputed writer. The authenticity of the Epistles might possibly be maintained upon traditionary evidence, but they threw no light on that of the other books, which are not even cited in them. The selection, therefore, could only be a matter of pure discretion, and to be ratified by consent, and who even made it, primarily, is unknown.

P. What was the use of having an unerring word from God, when the very determination, which is that word, was left so absolutely to erring man?

S. I cannot answer you.

P. When was the selection completed?

S. The process has been traced by Reuss from period to period. He shows that no acknowledged list or canon of the New Testament writings had been agreed upon up to A.D. 130; that up to A.D. 180, about which time Marcion endeavoured to make out such a list, there was none, and that none, in fact, existed up to the fourth century. He describes the efforts of Eusebius, in A.D. 320, to supply this need, and which ended in uncertainty; and then notices the canons made in 363 by the Council of Laodicea, and in 397 by the Synod of Carthage, but observes that these were but provincial councils, and in conflict. Finally, he shows that the question of the canon was still an open one in 1545, when, after much discussion, the Council of Trent pronounced upon it.[1]

Scriptures that are called in question.

P. What have been the prominent subjects of disagreement in making up the canon?

S. I have mentioned that the earliest version of the Old Testament, namely, the Greek translation, called the Septuagint, contains fourteen books, which the Protestants reject as apocryphal or spurious. These books were commonly accepted in the earlier times of Christianity. Jerome and the Eastern Church disallowed them,[2] but they were recognised, partially or wholly, by, among others, Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, Athanasius, and the Latin Church, and were formally adopted by the Councils of Florence in A.D. 1439, and of Trent a century later.[1] I have also specified various apocrypha of the Christian era which were viewed as inspired by prominent members of the early church. The books of the New Testament, which have been called in question, are the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the 2d of Peter, the 2d and 3d of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Apocalypse. The Epistle to the Hebrews was ascribed by Tertullian to Barnabas. Clement of Alexandria thought that Paul may have written it in Hebrew, and Luke have translated it into Greek. Origen, that some one, possibly Clement of Rome, or Luke, may have taken it down from Paul's preaching, but that God only knew who its author really was. The Latin Church rejected this Epistle. Jerome held it in doubt, saying it had been attributed variously to Barnabas, Luke, or Clement of Rome, and himself viewed it as a translation by an unknown hand.[2] To the end of the second century the Epistle of James was considered unapostolic. It was questioned by Origen; not entered in the Apostolical Constitutions, a document of the third century; placed by Eusebius in his list of disputed Scriptures; and shown by Jerome to be of doubtful authenticity.[3] Jerome also states that the 2d of Peter was called in question. This and the 3d of John were not known of to the end of the second century. Both these Epistles, as also the 2d of John, were held in doubt by Origen; were not included in the Apostolical constitutions; were rejected by Cyprian; and were entered by Eusebius in his disputed list.[4] The Epistle of Jude has been disallowed by Tertullian; it was not accepted as apostolic to the end of the second century; it was rejected by Origen; it appears in Eusebius's disputed list; and is shown by Jerome to have been extensively challenged.[5] The Greek churches at one time accepted, and at another rejected, the Apocalypse; it is placed in Eusebius's disputed list; and it was excluded at the Council of Laodicea.[6] The prominent Reformers were not in accord respecting these disputed Scriptures, though they were finally admitted into the Protestant canon. Zwingle re-

[1] Histoire du Canon, 29, 59, 77, 155, 157, 192, 218, 220, 221, 228, 293.
[2] Idem, 207, 221.

[1] Reuss, 137, 138, 153, 204, 217, 251, 286, 295.
[2] Idem, 38, 120, 141, 151, 207-210.
[3] Idem, 123, 143, 151, 160, 208.
[4] Idem, 123, 142, 151, 153, 160, 208.
[5] Idem, 117, 123, 143, 160, 208.
[6] Idem, 39, 160, 192.

jected the Apocalypse. Calvin, on critical grounds, disallowed the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, and the 2d of Peter. And Luther raised objections to the Hebrews, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse.[1]

Origin of Canon.

P. When, from the beginning, there was so little to guide the judgment in determining which of the current writings should be selected to form the volume of the New Testament, why was such a task undertaken at all?

S. At the outset of Christianity the need of a written record, as a vehicle for its doctrines, was not felt, and it is apparent that none was contemplated. The message was a short one, namely, to repent and be baptized as the end of all things was at hand, and it was delivered by Jesus and his earliest followers by verbal exhortation. Gradually a development and expansion of doctrine ensued, and the mission of the founder became magnified. The gospel narratives were then framed, and epistles were addressed to the different congregations. Then followed questionings, divergencies of opinion, and open conflict. Heresies, as they were called, sprang up. To meet these, authoritative records, to which to appeal, were seen to be desirable. The most approved of the gospel narratives were then put together. It was no longer a toleration of an unlimited number of such narratives, as when the "many" such prevailed without objection in the time of the writer of the gospel according to Luke. The selection was made, and the number restricted to the four now accepted gospels. And the scattered epistles, some in one place, some in another, were sought out, got together, and the best judgment that could be was formed upon the collection. It is not, as Reuss observes, as an inheritance from the apostles that the New Testament scriptures have been transmitted to us: they have been the growth of circumstances, the fruits of local custom, of tradition, and of practical necessity. The work might have been accomplished more satisfactorily had it been earlier undertaken. The lapse of a hundred years jeopardized its accomplishment, and let in a flood of weaknesses and incertitude.[2]

Transmission of Text.

P. What have been the channels for the transmission of these records from the early times to the present? Is it sure that the transcripts which exist are accurate?

[1] Reuss, 335, 336, 345, 346. [2] Idem, 157, 224–228.

S. The whole has depended upon the faithfulness of chains of copyists, transcribing in succession through the past centuries, the one after the other. The early writing was a representation of continuous letters without division into words, and in making the separation of the words error would arise. The manuscripts were subject to damage and partial obliteration, rendering them difficult to decipher. Abbreviations were used in them which were not always understood. Glosses in the margin were apt to be introduced as part of the text itself; and even intentional alterations were sometimes made with a view to improvement.[1] When printing was invented the text became in a measure fixed. The first printed edition of the New Testament was issued in 1516.[2]

Earliest manuscripts.

P. You indicate a long era of liability to errors and alterations through the agency of copyists. What is the age of the earliest existing manuscripts?

S. The first known of is the Vatican Codex. Whence it was acquired is not known. It appears in a catalogue of the year 1475. This contains the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, and is deficient as to the New in the four and a half last chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, and the Apocalypse. The next discovered is the Alexandrine Codex. This was presented to the king of England (Charles I.) in 1628 by the patriarch of Constantinople, but how it came into his hands, save that he obtained it in Alexandria, is not apparent. This also contains the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, and the epistle of Clement of Rome, a letter by Athanasius, and a treatise by Eusebius. A third is the Sinaitic Codex, discovered in the shape of waste paper by Dr Tischendorf in a convent on Mount Sinai in 1844 and 1859. Its previous history is unknown. This copy also contains the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, the epistle of Barnabas, and a portion of the Shepherd of Hermas. The real ages of these manuscripts is uncertain, but the learned venture to surmise that they may be thrown back to the fourth century.[3]

Citations of Old Testament.

P. Does the text of the New Testament, such as it is, afford any support to that of the Old?

[1] Davidson's Biblical Criticism. [2] Professor Stowe, 82.
[3] Tischendorf's Introduction to the New Testament; Professor Stowe, 64-73.

S. Not to the original text of the Old Testament. "The quotations," says Sharpe, "are usually taken from the Greek translation, called the Septuagint."[1] Sometimes they are from the Targums or Chaldee versions, which were made from the time of Ezra onwards. Dean Prideaux points out that when Jesus is said to have read from Isaiah in the synagogue (Luke iv. 16-19), the words do not agree exactly either with the Hebrew or the Septuagint version, and seem therefore to have come from one of these Targums. He also notices that when Jesus gave the famous utterance attributed to him when on the cross, "Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani," he used a Chaldee word, "Sabachthani," in lieu of the Hebrew word "Azabtani."[2]

P. Do you mean to say that when one inspired record had occasion to refer to another inspired record, uninspired translations were the medium made use of, and this even when the citations of a divine personage, such as Jesus is said to have been, were in question?

S. So it was, certainly.

P. The Septuagint contains a number of spurious books. When this version was used by the writers of the New Testament, was it pointed out by them that these productions were no real part of the divine record?

S. This was not done.

P. When the declaration was made that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," would not this embrace the Apocrypha also which appear in the version used for citation, unless the contrary were said?

S. Naturally, that would be a fair inference to draw.

Discernment of word of God in scriptures.

P. If we are left without landmarks whereby to trace these scriptures, both Old and New, to their authors, and there are no means of associating such authors, whoever they may have been, with God, in any act of his inspiring them; and if the existing versions have been transmitted from one copyist and translator to another through channels the trustworthiness of which cannot be ascertained, in what way is it possible to discern in these records the actual "Word of God"?

S. The actual word certainly cannot be traced out.

[1] Historic Notes on the Bible, 234. [2] Giles' Hebrew Records, 61, note.

P. What assurance, then, is there that in the Bible there is any divine communication to man at all?

S. When the outworks cannot be seen to stand, nothing of course remains but the internal evidence, afforded by the matter of the book itself, that it consists of revelations which are superhuman, and therefore divine. It is, in fact, on the sense of its being thus superhuman, that the Bible is, for the most part, practically accepted as the Word of God. This was the ground which the early Reformers took in judging of its contents and discriminating between the several books which claimed to be a portion of the sacred record. Having disallowed the doctrine of the Catholic church, they could not admit its right to make the Bible. Calvin contended that the Word of God could not be dependent on the work and authority of man. He trusted to the spirit of God to establish it and to expose counterfeits. Zwingle had already announced this principle. The Confession of Faith put forth in 1536 at Basle, was to the like effect. So also were the second Swiss Confession by Bèze and Bullinger made in 1566, and the Confessions of the French and of the Scotch churches. The English Church, however, depended in her articles on the force of usage, and such was the theory of the Bohemian Church.[1]

P. Thank you. I thought that the investigation I proposed to myself was drawing to a close, but you open out to me further field for investigation.

[1] Reuss, 313-319.

MIRACLES.

III.

RENEWED CONVERSATION.

PUNDIT.—Will you be good enough to inform me what matter there is in the Bible which professes prominently to be of a superhuman character.

STUDENT.—There appear in the Bible two special methods in which God is held to have demonstrated power, such as no human being can have possessed; namely, the enactment of miracles, and the utterance of prophecies. These are what are primarily relied on for evidence to the outer world of the divine character of the book.

P. What do you mean by a miracle?

S. I mean an act of a wonderful kind, in disturbance of every idea we have of a natural operation, by which it is meant that we should see that the hand of God has worked, in some special manner, for some particular end, so as to convince us that the thing in question is of him, and not of man. It is in such a sense that we are called upon to view and accept the miracles in the Bible.

Evidence to miracles.

P. We have people among us who pretend to some sort of superhuman power. How are one set of marvels to influence us more than another? I have seen through the pretensions of our people. May not the miracles of the Bible prove of the same untrustworthy sort?

S. What credit is due to them must of course depend upon examination?

P. On whose word am I to believe the miracles of the Bible?

S. On the word of the writers of the Bible.

P. But they appear for the most part to be absolutely unknown!

S. That is so certainly.

P. And whoever they were, they lived so long ago that no one can say whether they were people to be trusted or not. They may have uttered what is untrue for some purpose of their own, or they may have themselves been deluded into believing what more competent persons would have rejected as unreliable.

S. That is true.

P. Was the age in which the narrators of these miracles lived an enlightened one, or the contrary?

S. Those were far from being what we recognize as enlightened times. They believed then in magic, sorcery, witchcraft, divination, dreams, visions, evil spirits, and possessions. They thought the common sicknesses and infirmities of mankind were caused by evil beings of the spiritual world taking up their abode in the sufferers, from whom they had to be ejected. They also believed in visitations of angels and apparitions of God himself. I speak of the times of the New Testament as well as of those of the Old.

P. Then one must receive with great caution the statements of men so addicted to rely on the marvellous.

S. One would think so.

P. Do the narrators of the miracles profess to have seen what they describe as miracles?

S. They profess more or less to have had cognizance of the circumstances narrated by them, but scarcely in language such as would be used by eye-witnesses. And as these writers are unknown, and lived, as it may be judged, at times remote from the events described by them, it becomes apparent that they had their materials from others.

P. That is, these unknown writers tell us what they say they have heard from unknown parties, who may have handed down these stories from one to the other through a succession of credulous persons!

S. It is so. We have no better support for these miraculous exhibitions in the way of evidence, unless you can accept the accounts as inspired.

P. But I thought we were to receive the miracles

themselves, firstly, as proofs of the divine authority of the Bible!

S. It should be so, certainly.

Test of divinely wrought miracles.

P. As witchcraft and magic were believed in in those days, I presume there were marvels enacted which were traceable to such sources, as well as the miracles that were ascribed to God. Was there any rule, or test, by which to distinguish the divine miracles from the others?

S. There was. It is laid down, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. xiii. 1-3).

P. Then it requires that one should be sound in doctrine in order to discern whether a marvel has been enacted by God for a good end, or by a deceiver for a bad one.

S. So it appears.

P. I understood that the miracle was to lead to the recognition of the true God, but here it seems that the knowledge of the true God is necessary to the recognition of the miracle.

S. It certainly is so laid down.

Lying miracles.

P. I observe also that the miracles of the deceivers are said to be sanctioned by God in order to prove his people. Can God really lend himself to these false demonstrations?

S. So it is assuredly stated. The object appears to be not only to prove those who have received the knowledge of God, but to complete the destruction of those who have not apprehended him. "The mystery of iniquity," it is declared, "doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this

cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 7-12). This relates to the last and still future days of the present dispensation, of which again it is said, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. xxiv. 24).

P. I see that these wonder-workers are to assume the appearance of instruments of godliness. They are to come as if being Christ himself, and are to act in a way to deceive, if they can, the very elect of God.

S. Yes. That sort of misrepresentation appears to have been current from the earliest times of the Christian era. There were then "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel," it is added, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. xi. 13-15). And these deceivers so ape the position and work of the true emissaries of God, that they think even to impose themselves on Christ himself as persons who have been labouring in his cause. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

P. I presume the lying wonders are of a very different stamp from the true ones, and may be seen, by a discerning person, not to be of superhuman origin.

S. On the contrary, they are declared to be superhuman, being enacted with all the power of Satan, who is described as a superhuman being.

P. Can you point out samples of this sort of wonder working?

S. Yes. In the time of Moses God is said to have empowered Aaron to work wonders, in order to convince the

king of Egypt that he was an emissary from God. Aaron began by changing his rod into a serpent, turning the waters of the country into blood, and creating myriads of frogs, which covered the land; and the king's magicians, by means of their enchantments, did the like. Each man threw down his rod and it became a serpent—a real one, for Aaron's serpent eat these up; the water was converted into real blood, for there is nothing to show that there was mere discoloration produced; and the frogs called into being were of course true frogs, and not imitations merely, which could have deceived no one. Then the wonder-workers whom Christ is to disown appear to be able to cast out devils just as well as he did himself; and in the last days, when Satan and his emissaries are to come out in full power, there will be one of them who will be able to "make fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men," and will have "power to give life unto the image" of another being, who is described as a "beast," and to make it "speak" and issue orders (Rev. xiii. 13-15). Now Christ is said to have turned water into wine, which is analogous to the magician's conversion of water into blood, but he never did anything so calculated to give public demonstration of being armed with divine power as to call down fire from heaven, nor so strikingly beyond the bounds of man's common capabilities as to turn a dead stick into a live animal, to call into being a multitude of other living creatures created apparently out of nothing, or to put life into an inanimate image, so as to impart to it volition and speech. The nearest approaches he is said to have made to the last two wonders are the multiplication of food, and the restoring life to the dead, but these are certainly short of the creation of life where previously there had been no life.

P. You astonish me. If the lying wonders transcend the divine miracles in magnitude of effect and power, for what purpose can the real miracles have been put forth at all?

S. That I am unable to explain.

Combination of miracles and doctrine.

P. From what you said before, the real test of a miracle, as to its originating with God, or with deceivers, is the test of the accompanying doctrine, whether that be true or false. After what method did Jesus combine his doctrine with his miracles?

S. He said that he came from God, and that his miracles were an evidence thereof. On one occasion a palsied man was brought to him, and Jesus comforted him by telling him that his sins were forgiven him, and when his power to exercise the divine privilege of forgiving sins was questioned, he said, "Whether is it easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine house," which the sick man accordingly did (Matt. ix. 1-8). On another occasion, a message was sent to him that a friend of his, named Lazarus, was dying. Jesus purposely delayed his coming until the man was dead, and then said, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe." After this, he "lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Then he calls upon the dead man with a loud voice to come forth, and he does so (John xi. 15, 41-44).

P. I can see no more in this than that the miracles were to prove the doctrine, which doctrine might in itself be either true or otherwise. In what respect does such a method differ from that of the false Christs who are to appeal to miracles in proof of their mission?

S. I cannot tell you.

P. Who did Christ say of himself that he was?

S. He professes to have been divinely begotten without a human father, and thus to be the Son of God.

P. Do you mean to say that he set himself up as on a par with God in point of constitution of being and nature, as a human son is with a human father.

S. Yes. He is described as the Logos, or word, who "in the beginning," that is, before the creation (Gen. i. 1), was "with God," and "was God" (John i. 1). He said, "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30); that whosoever had seen him had seen the Father (John xiv. 9); that as men believed in God, so also were they to believe in him (John xiv. 1); and were to honour him just as they honoured the Father (John v. 23). "Being," as it is declared, "in the form of

God," he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6), and when addressed by one of his followers as his Lord and his God, he accepted the homage, and said that they were specially objects of blessing, who should so believe of him without having had the privilege of actually seeing him (John xx. 28, 29).

P. But was he not personally a man in all respects such as one of ourselves ?

S. Assuredly he was so. He was born of a woman, became developed from infancy, through childhood, to manhood; that is, he "increased in wisdom and stature" (Luke ii. 52) as we do; he was subjected to all the "infirmities" of our nature, being "in all points tempted as we are" (Heb. iv. 15); and he suffered death as any other mortal man.

P. Then his doctrine was that there were two Gods, himself and his Father.

S. They are called, in some sense I cannot explain to you, one, but are nevertheless exhibited to us as two. For example, in the passages I have cited, Jesus is said to have been "with God," and himself to "be God." He could not be said to be with God, unless also distinct from God. God being with himself is not a circumstance that it would have been necessary to announce to us. He said that while they believed in God, they were to believe "also" in him, the distinctness of object being again apparent. And in the same sense of distinctive being he felt it was no robbery to look on himself as "equal" with God. Then we have him in the narratives given of him praying to the Father, feeling forsaken by him, and being offered up to him as a propitiatory sacrifice, each position presenting us with a distinctive being. In fact, there are three such spoken of, and not merely two. The third is the Holy Ghost, or the comforter, whom he promised to send to his people. "It is expedient for you," he told them, "that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you" (John xvi. 7).

P. This resembles the Hindoo Trimurti, or three gods in one. Had the Jews any more Gods than one ?

S. They were distinctly told that for them there was but one. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). "Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else" (Deut. iv. 39).

P. I thought it was the test of a false miracle if the wonder-worker should say, "let us go after other gods," there being, it seems, but one God for the Jews; and here you have Jesus enacting miracles to prove that there are more Gods than one, and that he himself is one of three !

S. I am unable to answer you.

Account of the miracles and marvels.

P. Would you be good enough to give me an idea what the marvels are which are recounted in the Old as well as the New Testament ?

S. I have collected the whole together in a paper from which I will read to you. It is rather a lengthy statement.

Miracles with animals.

There is an account of a serpent which held a conversation with the first woman Eve. Moses changed his rod into a serpent, and then turned the serpent back into the rod; Aaron turned his rod into a serpent, and the magicians of Pharaoh did the like with their rods. Moses set up a brazen serpent, the mere looking at which cured people who were bitten by real serpents. Frogs, lice, and swarms of flies were created miraculously. An ass spoke to the prophet Balaam, reasoning with him, and rebuking him. A man of God is betrayed into an act of disobedience by a false prophet. The false prophet is then inspired by God to sentence him to a violent end. On this a lion meets with and kills him, but does not tear his carcase or molest his ass. The lion and the ass are found, in fact, standing by the carcase. The prophet Daniel is thrown into a lion's den, but by God's interposition the lions do not touch him. The prophet Elijah, when in a desert place, is fed by ravens, who provisioned him by the "command of God." The prophet Elisha is taunted by some children with being bald. He curses them in the name of the Lord, and thereupon two bears came and killed forty-two of them. A whale is made to swallow the prophet Jonah, and to throw him up alive on shore after he had been in him three days. Jesus provides himself with tribute-money from a fish who had it in readiness, holding it for him in his mouth. The Holy Ghost descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove. And a herd of swine, numbering about two thousand, became possessed with devils cast out of a man, and

rush into the sea and drown themselves. These, you will observe, are marvels acted out with animals.

—with water.

In another group water is the element operated with. Aaron turns the waters of Egypt into blood, and Pharaoh's magicians do the same. Jesus turns jars of water into wine to furnish additional supplies for a feast. The Red Sea is divided for the passage of the Israelites into the wilderness, and the Jordan for their passage out of it. The Jordan is again divided by Elijah with a stroke of his mantle to allow of Elisha and himself crossing the river; and Elisha performs the feat immediately afterwards, with the same mantle, in order to get back again. Moses changes bitter waters into sweet by casting a certain tree into them; and Elisha makes poisonous waters wholesome by throwing in salt. Moses twice draws water from rocks by a blow of his rod, once at Horeb, and the second time at Meribah. The fleece of Gideon is made alternately wet and dry. Elijah creates a drought for three years and a half by stopping all supplies of rain and dew. Elisha puts an end to another drought by making water pour in from a neighbouring and very arid territory, Edom. Naaman is cured of leprosy by bathing, at a prophet's command, seven times in Jordan. An angel periodically disturbs the water of a pool at Bethesda, and whoever first steps in is cured of any malady he may have. A blind man, after having his eyes anointed by Jesus with clay, is restored to sight on washing in the pool of Siloam. Jesus smooths the troubled waves of the sea in stormy weather. The iron head of an axe, which had accidentally fallen into water, is made to float by the prophet Elisha, and is thus recovered. Jesus and Peter walk on the waves of a boisterous sea as if on firm land.

—with fire.

In another group fire is the medium used. An angelic being, stationed at the garden of Eden, has a flaming sword which turns every way. Abraham offers up a sacrifice, when a smoking furnace appears, with a burning lamp, which passes between the pieces of the victims he had cut up. The exhibition of miraculous fire is a common demonstration of the acceptance of a sacrifice. When Aaron sacrifices, fire comes out "from before the Lord," and consumes the burnt offering. When Gideon, (who was not of the priesthood,) makes a sacrificial offering, fire comes out of a rock at the touch of an angel, and burns up the offering. When Manoah, (also not of the priesthood,) sacrifices, an angel ascends in the flame of the altar. When Elijah, (also not of the priesthood,) has his trial in sacrifice with the priests of Baal, "the fire of the Lord" descends and consumes the offering. And David's sacrifice, and afterwards Solomon's, (neither being of the priesthood,) are thus consumed with heavenly fire. God rains brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the cities of the plain, and destroys the whole with their inhabitants. Nadab and Abihu are "devoured" with "fire from the Lord" for using other than the sacred fire for their censers. When the Israelites utter complaint in the wilderness, the "fire of the Lord" consumes many of them. "Fire from the Lord" destroys two hundred and fifty persons who offered incense in conjunction with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, when they sought to invade the priestly office. Two successive bodies, consisting each of an officer and fifty men, are deputed by the king of Israel to bring Elijah before him, but he rids himself of them, on each occasion, by calling down fire from heaven which destroys them. An angel appears to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush which burns without being consumed. The Lord descends upon Mount Sinai in fire, and the smoke ascends as that of a furnace, the fire burning up "unto the midst of heaven." Shadrach, Meschach, and Abed-nego, are bound and thrown into a fiery furnace, but not even their hair or garments are singed. God goes before the Israelites in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, to lead them in all their wanderings in the wilderness. A visitation of fire is made to Elijah when alone in the wilderness. When he has run his career, he is taken up in a chariot of fire, with horses of fire, bodily, to heaven. His successor Elisha is afterwards seen on a "mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about" him. And cloven tongues, as of fire, descend on the disciples of Jesus at the feast of Pentecost.

—with food.

A fourth group is connected with supplies of food. A substance called manna was showered down for the Israelites daily during their forty years wandering in the wilderness. As they could not work on the Sabbaths, a double supply was always sent them on the days preceding. This has been described as "angels' food," and "bread from heaven." The

supplies brought by the ravens to Elijah consisted of bread and meat, which they gave him daily, morning and evening. After this, by the divine command, during the drought of three years and a half, called down by himself, he goes to a poor widow for his provisions. She has nothing but a handful of meal and a little oil in a cruse, of which she makes cakes for the prophet, herself, and son. But till the rain comes down, and fresh supplies become procurable, the meal and oil are miraculously renewed. Elisha falls in with a poor woman who has nothing left in her house but a pot of oil. He bids her borrow as many vessels as she can from her neighbours, and after shutting the door, pour in the oil. The oil flows till it has filled all the vessels, and then is stayed. Elisha bids her sell the oil, pay off her debts, and live upon the residue. The companions of Elisha, in a time of dearth, make a pottage of herbs, wild vine, and wild gourds. As they eat it they find it to be poisonous, and say, "There is death in the pot." Elisha makes the food wholesome by throwing in some meal. Twenty loaves are brought to him, with which, to their great surprise, he satisfies a hundred men, a surplus remaining unconsumed. Jesus performs the same miracle twice, but on a larger scale. On one occasion, with five loaves and two fishes he satisfies five thousand men, besides women and children, there remaining twelve baskets full of remnants over. On another, he provides for four thousand men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few little fishes, and remnants are left that fill seven baskets.

Miscellaneous miracles.

Then there are miracles of a miscellaneous order which cannot be thus classified. Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt for venturing to look back at the judgment executing upon Sodom. Seven priests, with seven trumpets of rams' horns, and the ark of the covenant following them, march round the besieged city of Jericho, once daily, blowing on their trumpets. On the seventh day they march round the city seven times, trumpeting, and the people, at the command of Joshua, shout, and the walls of the city fall flat, whereupon the Israelites take possession of it. The Israelites overcome the Amorites in battle, slaughtering many of them. "The Lord casts down great stones from heaven" on the flying enemy, killing more than had been slain with the sword. Joshua, to prolong the

time for wreaking vengeance on the already discomfited foe, commands the sun to "stand still on Gibeon," and the moon "in the valley of Ajalon," and "so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." Hezekiah has a boil, which, at the recommendation of the prophet Isaiah, is subdued with a lump of figs. Still the king is ill, and anxious for some sign by which he may know that he will be well enough to attend the temple in three days. Isaiah promises that God shall alter the measure of time on the dial by ten degrees, giving Hezekiah the choice whether time shall be advanced, or put back, to that limit. Hezekiah thinks little of time being advanced, and therefore chooses that it should be made to retrograde, which is accordingly effected. At a great feast, Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, suddenly sees the fingers of a hand writing some mysterious characters "over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall" of his palace. He and his lords are much troubled at the sight. Daniel is called in, and interprets the writing to mean that the king's rule is to be overthrown, and his kingdom divided between the Medes and Persians. Wise men, at the birth of Jesus, are guided by a star to Jerusalem. In some way that is not explained, they are aware that the phenomenon is sent to lead them to one who was born king of the Jews, to whom they are to pay their respects. At Jerusalem they lose sight of the star, and therefore make inquiry for the future king, throwing the whole city, including the existing king, Herod, into commotion. Herod understands that the child so announced is the Christ, and directs the wise men to look for him in Bethlehem, where the Christ, according to prediction, was to be born. The wise men set out, and "lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." The wise men thus find the infant, and present to him their offerings. Enoch is taken up, bodily, alive, to heaven; so is Elijah; and so is Jesus after resuscitation from death. Jesus was "driven" by the spirit into the wilderness, where he was for forty days "with the wild beasts," and without food. After this Satan appeared to him, and took him, and placed him on a pinnacle of the temple, asking him to cast himself down from thence, in order to prove the promise of God that he should be borne up

by angels; and he also took him up into "an exceeding high mountain," whence he "showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," "in a moment of time," promising to confer all these things upon him if he would fall down and worship him. After baptizing a certain eunuch, "the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more," and then "Philip was found at Azotus." Paul was "caught up to the third heaven," "into paradise," but "whether in the body, or whether out of the body," he could not tell. Jesus was on an inland sea with his disciples when "a great tempest" arose, and the vessel was "covered with the waves," and "they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy." Jesus was at this time asleep, and on being aroused by his disciples he "rebuked the winds and the seas, and there was a great calm." Jesus, being hungry, was disappointed in not finding fruit on a fig-tree at the time when it was not the season for figs, whereon he "cursed" the tree, saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," and "presently the fig-tree withered away." At the feast of Pentecost the promise of Jesus to send the Holy Ghost was fulfilled. The disciples being all assembled, there comes "a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind," which fills the house. Then, as it were, "cloven tongues, like as of fire," settle upon each of them, and they become "all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." These disciples were Galileans, an ignorant race, speaking a barbaric form of Hebrew, but now they were able to make themselves intelligible to "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians," with the same fluency and accuracy, as if of these various nations and tribes themselves.

There is a large class of cases wherein various bodily ailments were cured miraculously. At times also infirmities were inflicted miraculously in judgment.

Curing fever.

Jesus, with a touch, cured Peter's wife's mother of fever; and by a word drove fever from the son of a certain nobleman, without even seeing him. Paul, by laying on of hands

and prayer, cured the father of Publius of a fever and bloody flux.

—palsy.

Jesus cured the servant of a centurion of palsy with a word, without seeing him, and restored another who was brought to him quite prostrate with this malady, telling him to "Arise, take up his bed, and walk," which he forthwith did. Peter, in the name of Jesus, said to a man who "had kept his bed eight years sick of the palsy," "Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately."

—leprosy.

God, after enabling Moses to convert his rod into a serpent, and the serpent back again into the rod, to show what more he could do, told him to put his hand into his bosom, and on taking it out, he found it "leprous as snow." After this, God told him to put his hand again into his bosom, and on taking it out, "it was turned again as his other flesh." Moses's sister Miriam was dealt with in the same way, but in judgment. She was struck with leprosy; but, at the intercession of Moses, was restored. Naaman, the Syrian, was a leper. At the command of Elisha he "dipped himself seven times in Jordan," and "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Gehazi, the prophet's servant, covertly received from him a present in the name of his master, and the prophet, miraculously knowing thereof, passed sentence on him, saying, "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever," upon which "he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." A "man of God" denounced an altar on which King Jeroboam was offering incense. The king put out his hand to lay hold of him, when it "dried up, so that he could not pull it in again." Uzziah, for invading the priestly office, was struck with leprosy, and, though a king, was thrust out of the presence of those he was with. Jesus cured a leper with a touch. Ten lepers came to him, and on his telling them, while standing "afar off," shouting to him, to go and show themselves to the priests, "it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed."

—blindness.

Some men of Sodom were struck blind by the angels who went there to visit Lot. The Syrians lay in ambush for the Israelites, but the snare repeatedly failed of effect through the intervention of the prophet Elisha. The king of Syria surrounded a city where Elisha was with "horses, chariots, and a

great host." At the prayer of Elisha these were all struck blind. Elisha professed to guide them to the city, where the man they were in search of (namely himself) was, and so conducted them to Samaria, to the capital of the king of Israel, where they were made captive. The king of Israel wished to put them to the sword, but Elisha prohibited this, had the captives fed, and then allowed them to return to their master. On one occasion two blind men followed Jesus, imploring his help. He touched their eyes, which then "were opened." On another occasion two blind men sitting by the wayside called to him, and he touched their eyes, "and immediately their eyes received sight." A blind man was brought to him. Jesus led him out of the town and spat on his eyes, and asked him what he saw, to which he replied, "I see men as trees walking." Then he put his hands upon his eyes, and told him to look up, when "he was restored, and saw every man clearly." Jesus saw a man who had been blind from his birth. He spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and anointed his eyes therewith, and sent him to "wash in the pool of Siloam," after which he came back seeing. Paul was struck blind for three days by a heavenly vision. The Lord, in a vision, directed one Ananias to go to him, telling him that Paul, in a vision, had seen him coming to him, and restoring his sight. Ananias accordingly went, and put his hands on him, when "immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Elymas, described as a sorcerer, in some way withstood Barnabas and Paul. Paul, being "filled with the Holy Ghost," in the name of the Lord, condemned him to blindness for a season. "And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

—dumbness.

There were an aged couple, Zacharias and his wife, who were childless. An angel appeared to Zacharias and assured him that his prayers had been heard, and that his wife should bear him a son, whose name he required should be John. Zacharias hesitated to believe the good news, when the angel, who was called Gabriel, struck him with dumbness, which lasted till the son was born, and then his power of speech returned to him directly he had written down that the boy's name was to be

John. "A dumb man possessed with a devil" was brought to Jesus, "and when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake." At another time, "was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, in so much that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." A man came to him and said, "Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not." The sufferer was then brought to Jesus; "and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more unto him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead, in so much that many said, He is dead." The disciples asked Jesus "privately" how it was that they could not cast him out, when he explained, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." A man deaf, and with an impediment in his speech, was brought to Jesus. He put his fingers into his ears, and spat, and touched his tongue, and then, looking up to heaven and sighing, he said, "Be opened;" on which hearing and freedom of speech were given to him.

—maiming.

When Jesus was arrested, Peter struck at the servant of the high priest with his sword, "and cut off his right ear;" on which Jesus "touched his ear, and healed him." Whether this was by causing a new ear to replace the one cut off, or how the remedy was effected, the narrative does not make clear.

—lameness.

Peter met with a man who was "lame from his mother's womb," and unable to walk. Invoking the name of Jesus, he bid him "rise up and walk," and giving him his hand, "immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

Casting out evil spirits.

Some examples of ejecting evil spirits have been given when Jesus dealt with the blind, deaf, and dumb; and other instances are numerous. Jesus was met by two men "possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce,

so that no man might pass by that way." The devils knew him as the Son of God, and asked if he had come "to torment them before the time." There were about two thousand swine feeding there, and the devils asked permission to enter them, if to be ejected from the men. This was allowed; they entered the swine, and, "behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters." A woman of Canaan asked Jesus to relieve her daughter, who was "grievously vexed with a devil." He objected to help her, as she was not an Israelite; but on her renewing her solicitations, he acted, without seeing the daughter, who "was made whole from that very hour." There was a man in the synagogue "with an unclean spirit." Jesus bid him "come out of him," whereupon, "when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him." There were "certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities," and among them was "Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." "There was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bound together, and could in no wise lift up herself." Jesus "laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight." Some one, who was not a follower of Jesus, had been observed casting out devils in his name; and on being told of this, Jesus tolerated the act. After the death of Jesus, Paul met with "a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination." He commanded the spirit to come out of her, and it did so.

Raising the dead.

Even the dead were raised to life. The son of the widow who had supported Elijah with the inexhaustible meal and oil, fell ill and died. Elijah "stretched himself upon the child three times," and cried unto God, saying, "I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again;" and this was done, "and he came to life." A certain Shunamite woman made a lodging on her premises for Elisha, to be occupied by him when he passed that way. She was old and childless, but out of gratitude the prophet promised that she should have a child, which accordingly was born. The child, however, died. The woman hastened to the prophet and laid hold of his feet. The prophet's servant wished to thrust her away, but he told him to leave her alone, saying she was evidently vexed about something, "and the Lord had hid it from him, and had not told him." Elisha despatched his servant as speedily as possible with his staff, directing him to lay it "upon the face of the child." No results, however, followed. The prophet himself arrived, and, "behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed." Elisha entered the room with his servant, and closed the door. He then prayed to God, and laid upon the child, and he "put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm." This process he renewed, after which "the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes." One of the rulers of the synagogue came to Jesus and said, "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." Jesus, accordingly, went to his house, and "put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway." The only son of a widow of Nain died. As the corpse was being carried by, Jesus stopped the bier, and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, was very ill, and his sisters urgently sent for him. He purposely remained where he was till the sick man was dead. Then after he had been four days dead, and the body was decomposing, he went to the sepulchre, and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes." One Dorcas, a benevolent woman, died. Peter went to the room where she was laid out, and "put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed; and turning him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up." While Paul was preaching in an upper chamber for a considerable time, a young man named Eutychus "sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." Paul went down, threw himself upon him, and then said, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him." The young man then returned to the upper room, took food, and continued talking with them, "even till break of day." On the other hand, at a time when the disciples of Jesus had all things in common, one Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession, and kept back part of the proceeds from the

public purse. On Ananias laying down the other part at the apostle's feet, Peter, having miraculous knowledge of what he had done, accused Ananias of lying "to the Holy Ghost;" and directly his guilt was thus proclaimed, Ananias "fell down, and gave up the ghost." The wife came in, and Peter tested her by asking her for what the land had been sold; and on her giving a false reply, he intimated to her that she was to be carried out as her husband had just been. On this she "fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost."

Healing multitudes.

Besides the particular instances given, multitudes, whenever they presented themselves, were healed by Jesus and his disciples. "Jesus went about all Galilee, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went through all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them." "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages healing every sickness and every disease among the people." "And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them." So that when the Baptist sent two of his disciples to him to exhibit his credentials, he appealed to these manifestations. "Go," he said, "and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up." And he gave the same power to his disciples. On one occasion he sent the twelve apostles out to preach, and then said to them, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give." And he thus appointed other seventy also, "to go forth, two and two, before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come;" and these he commissioned, in every city they entered, to "heal the sick that are therein." These persons were surprised at the proofs of the power committed to them, and "returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

Miracles wrought with inanimate substances.

Inanimate substances, connected with those who worked miracles, had in themselves restorative power. "And it came

to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet." "A certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years," and was hopelessly incurable, "when she heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For, she said, if I may touch but his clothes, I shall be well. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." Jesus was sensible at the time "that virtue had gone out of him." When he landed on the shore of lake Gennesaret, the people, knowing him, "ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole." "And by the hands of the apostles," after the death of Jesus, "were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; in so much that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

mate substances.

The possession of miraculous power was, in effect, bound up with the faith in Jesus; and his followers were promised the same, or even greater power, than he had exhibited.

Inquiring of God by Urim, Thummim, &c.

There are other manifestations of a miraculous nature. The Urim and Thummim were some mysterious objects, which are nowhere described, that were worn by the high priest on his breast (Ex. xxviii. 30; Lev. viii. 8), and by means of which, in some manner not stated, he obtained counsel of God, whereby to direct the movements of the Israelites (Num. xxvii. 21; Deut. xxxiii. 8). In the time of Saul these engines we learn were inoperative, God refusing to answer him thereby (1 Sam. xxviii. 6). When the Israelites returned out of the Babylonish capitivity they were without them, but had a hope, from what

direction it is not explained, of being supplied therewith again (Ezra ii. 63). The mercy seat between the cherubims on the ark was God's appointed place for "communing with Moses" (Ex. xxv. 22), and thither the Israelites went in the times of the judges to "enquire of the Lord" (Jud. xx. 27). In Saul's time this was not practised (1 Chron. xiii. 3). The altar was also resorted to for a like purpose. David wished "to enquire of God" there on one occasion, but was afraid to do so from the presence of an angel with a sword (1 Chron. xxi. 30). Ahaz thus applied for information. "The brazen altar," he said, "shall be for me to enquire by" (2 Kings xvi. 15). The ephod, which was a priestly garment, was also used by David for the same purpose when he wished to know from God whether he should pursue the Amalekites (1 Sam. xxx. 7, 8).

—by prophets-

Prophets were, however, the ordinary channel of communication with God. Moses acted in such capacity. "The people," he said, "come unto me to enquire of God: when they have a matter, they come unto me" (Ex. xviii. 15, 16). The subject of their warfares was one on which they commonly sought such direction. David, having personal access to God, apparently either as a prophet or a kingly priest, "enquired of the Lord, saying, shall I go and smite these Philistines." He received an encouraging answer, but his people being nevertheless apprehensive as to results, he "enquired of the Lord yet again," and being promised success, the expedition was carried out triumphantly (1 Sam. xxiii. 1-5). At another time "David enquired of the Lord, saying, shall I go up to the Philistines." He was told he might do so, and he defeated them. The enemy, however, rallied, on which "David enquired of the Lord" how he was to proceed, and was told, "Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees," taking which course he again defeated them (2 Sam. v. 19-25). Ahab, king of Israel, wished to recover Ramoth-gilead from the Syrians, and induced Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in the enterprise. Jehoshaphat begged that the Lord might be enquired of, on which Ahab assembled four hundred prophets who promised success. Jehoshaphat, still not satisfied, asked if there was not yet another prophet. Ahab said there was one Micaiah, but from whom no good was to be expected, as he hated him. Still Jehoshaphat wished Micaiah to be employed.

Ahab reluctantly consented. Micaiah was asked, "Shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?" and his answer was, "Go, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Ahab, unaccustomed to receive pleasant intelligence from Micaiah, entreated him to say "nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord." On this Micaiah indicated that the people would be dispersed, with the loss of their leader, and then he disclosed a wonderful scene. "I saw," he declared, "the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so. Now, therefore," added Micaiah, "behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee." Ahab became incensed, and committed Micaiah to prison. The two kings then went forth to battle and were defeated, Ahab being killed (1 Kings xxii. 1-37). King Zedekiah being threatened by the king of Babylon, asked Jeremiah to enquire of the Lord for him. Jeremiah announced in reply dreadful calamities (Jer. xxi. 1-10). Zedekiah again resorted to Jeremiah, who told him that on the withdrawal of the king of Egypt, who had come to defend Jerusalem, the Babylonians would return and destroy the city (Jer. xxxvii. 3-8). The united forces of Judah, Israel, and Edom, in crossing a desert to attack the Moabites, were in great straits for want of water. The king of Judah asked for a prophet, through whom inquiry of the Lord might be made. Elisha was produced, and he obtained for them a miraculous supply (2 Kings iii. 5-20).

These inquiries of God were also made on all sorts of occasions. After the death of Saul, David, who was still not fully established on the throne, asked, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said to him, Go up. And David said, whither shall I go up? And he said, unto Hebron" (2 Sam. ii. 1). At another time he asked, why they were afflicted with a

famine. "And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." On this David gave up seven of Saul's grandsons to the Gibeonites for execution, or rather sacrifice, "and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord." The bones of the victims, together with those of Saul and Jonathan, were then buried, "And after that God was entreated for the land" (2 Sam. xxi. 1—14.) The king of Syria being ill, sent one of his retainers named Hazael to Elisha to inquire of the Lord by him "whether he should recover of this disease." Elisha's answer was mysterious. He said, "Go, say unto him, Thou mayst certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die." He then looked stedfastly at Hazael and wept, explaining that he foresaw how he would oppress the Israelites. Hazael was amazed to hear that he should be in a position to exercise such power, on which the prophet further explained, "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." On this Hazael went to his master and told him that the prophet had said he was to recover, and the following morning he smothered him with a wet cloth, and "reigned in his stead" (2 Kings viii. 7-15). When the Book of the Law, discovered by Hilkiah, was brought to king Josiah, he sent Hilkiah and the others to "enquire of the Lord" for him "concerning the words of this book that is found," and they applied to "Huldah the prophetess," wife of the "keeper of the wardrobe," who told them what was to ensue pursuant to the predictions in the book (2 Kings xxii. 11-20.)

Answers from God refused.

When the people were given up to idolatries, God refused to lend himself to their inquiries. "Should I," he says, "be enquired of at all by them? Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols. I the Lord will answer him by myself." "Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you" (Ezek. xiv. 3-7; xx. 3, 31.) Saul had "enquired of the Lord," and when "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets," he had recourse to a woman who had "a familiar spirit," and she called up the departed

spirit of Samuel, from whom he learnt his fate. And because he had taken this course, and "enquired not of the Lord; therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse" (1 Sam. xxviii. 6-20; 1 Chron. x. 14.)

Direct communication with God.

The early patriarchs, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had familiar speech with God. Even their wives could directly communicate with him. Eve personally defended herself when God accused her of disobedience. Sarah did so, by a prevarication, when God had observed her laughing at the idea his promise had conveyed to her, that in her old age she should have a child; and Rebekah questioned God about her own condition, and received the reply that she would bear twins. "Two nations," she was told, "are in thy womb." Even the wicked Cain had this personal access to God, and was able to secure from him exemption from the penalty for his crime. In later times Moses had constant intercourse with God in a most unceremonial manner. "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. xxxiii. 11), conversing with him "mouth to mouth" (Num. xii. 8). There is also an instance where, apparently, the Israelites were admitted to communicate with God in an informal and direct manner, without any medium. Saul had been chosen king by lot, but "when they sought him he could not be found. Therefore they inquired of the Lord further if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff" (1 Sam. x. 21, 22).

Visitation by dreams. Old Testament.

Then there were frequent visitations in dreams. This is described to be an appointed method of communication between God and man. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction" (Job xxxiii. 14-16). The prophets again are pointed to as the approved channels for such intercourse. "If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Num. xii. 6). In the latter days the capacity was to be largely extended, and the promise is said to have been realized, just after the death of Jesus, among his followers. "This," it is said, "is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it

shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams " (Acts ii. 16, 17). But, practically, this method of communication was resorted to without the intervention of any acknowledged medium such as a prophet, and took effect even with persons not worshipping the true God. The intercourse was thus quite informal and promiscuous. The first recorded dream is that of Abimelech, the Philistine king of Gerar. Imposed upon by Abraham into thinking that the aged Sarah was still unmarried, he had taken possession of her, when God came to him " in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken ; for she is a man's wife." Abimelech protested his innocence, pleading the deception put upon him, and God, in reply, absolved him. In this special way the chastity of Sarah was preserved (Gen. xx. 1-6). The dreamer here was a heathen king. The next so dealt with was the patriarch Jacob, and he had two divine dreams of a very dissimilar description. The first was of heaven, there appearing to him a ladder of immense length " set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven," and up and down this, " behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. xxviii. 12). His other dream was altogether of earth, earthy. It related to the procreation of cattle, in which " the angel of God " spake unto him and pointed out how all the males were " ringstraked, speckled, and grisled," a revelation which put into his head a device whereby he was enabled to defraud Laban extensively in the partition of the cattle between them (Gen. xxxi. 10-12). After this, Laban, who was an idolater, is visited by God in a dream, and warned not to molest Jacob, who was decamping with what he had thus appropriated (Gen. xxxi. 24). Then follows a godly dreamer, namely Joseph. He has two dreams, which implied that his father, mother, and brethren were to render him obeisance (Gen. xxxvii. 6-10). After this, the chief butler and chief baker of the king of Egypt, that is idolaters, are visited with prophetic dreams, which imported that the one was to be restored to favour, and the other hanged (Gen. xl. 1-22). King Pharaoh, also an idolater, had two prophetic dreams, both indicating the same events, namely,

years of plenty to be followed by years of famine (Gen. xli. 1-7). A Midianite had a dream about a cake of barley overthrowing a tent, which a fellow Midianite was empowered to see applied to a particular person, namely to Gideon, a Jewish leader, signifying that he was to overthrow their host (Jud. vii. 13, 14). Then we pass to Solomon, the great Jewish king, to whom " the Lord appeared " in a dream, promising him wisdom and riches (1 King iii. 5-15). The person next visited in this manner was the idolatrous king Nebuchadnezzar. He had two dreams, one relating to monarchies extending from his time to the end of all things, and the other to his own temporary downfall and degradation to the condition of a beast, when he " was driven from men, and he did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws" (Dan. ii. 31-45 ; iv. 10-33). The prophet Daniel had afterwards a dream, which was the repetition of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream, but with different imagery (Dan. vii. 2-14).

Visitation by dreams. New Testament.

These are the dreams of the Old Testament. In the New Testament Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus, had several dreams. He had married Mary as a maiden, but found her to be with child, and was about to put her away, when " the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife : for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost " (Matt. i. 18-20). Then the wise men from the East who had come to make their offerings to the infant Jesus were " warned of God in a dream " not to " return to Herod," that is to Jerusalem, and so they went home by " another way " (Matt. ii. 12). After this " the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream," warning him to flee with his family from Herod to Egypt, where he was to remain until God should " bring him word." Accordingly, " when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt," telling him of the event, and that he might return to the land of Israel. But coming there, he discovered that Herod's son was ruling in his stead, and he was afraid to proceed, on which God rectified his former instructions by telling him in a dream to " turn aside into the parts of Galilee " (Matt. ii. 13-22). Lastly, we have a heathen female, namely Pilate's wife, suffer-

ing many things in a dream connected with Jesus, of whose innocence she consequently assured her husband Pilate, when seated in judgment upon him (Matt. xxvii. 19).

Fallacious dreams.

But there was a liability that fallacious dreams should be put about. "If," according to the rule already pointed out, "there should arise a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams," who should say, "Let us go after other gods," he was not to be listened to, with whatever wonders he might support his testimony (Deut. xiii. 1-3). And "false prophets," who might say, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed," trying to make God's people "forget his name by their dreams," he would repudiate, saying, "I sent them not, nor commanded them" (Jer. xxiii. 25-32; xxvii. 9, 10; xxix. 8, 9; Zech. x. 2).

Visions. Old Testament.

From dreams we pass to visions. Here the prophets were the persons particularly favoured. "If there be a prophet among you," says God, "I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Num. xii. 6). Accordingly, various prophetic utterances are ushered in as imparted in visions. There is the "vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem," in the days of certain kings of Judah (Isa. i. 1). "A grievous vision is declared" unto him (Isa. xxi. 2). He speaks also of "The burden of the valley of vision" (Isa. xxii. 1). There is "The vision of Obadiah concerning Edom" (Obad. i. 1), and "The book of the vision of Naham the Elkoshite," which is "The burden of Nineveh" (Nah. i. 1). "Write the vision," Habakkuk was told, "and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Hab. ii. 2). And we hear of "the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (2 Chron. ix. 29), which are now lost. There were also special visions. "The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision," announcing to him his promised seed and their possessions (Gen. xv. 1-21). "And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said Jacob, Jacob, and he said, Here am I," and then God encouraged him to go down to Egypt (Gen. xlvi. 2-4). Balaam, who was an idolater, and given to the employment of "enchantments," received an important manifestation. "The spirit of God came upon him," on which "he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Boer hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open;" and then he gives forth a prophecy of the prosperity awaiting the children of Israel (Num. xxiv., 1-9). Samuel, when only a child, had a vision, in which the Lord repeatedly called to him, and after gaining his attention denounced to him his superior and protector, the priest Eli (1 Sam. iii. 1-15). The prophet Nathan had a vision in which God instructed him to inform David that his house, or temple, was to be built, not by him, but by his son, "the throne" of whose "kingdom" he would "establish for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 1-17). Job, in awe-inspiring terms, described a a visitation he had. "In thoughts, from the visions of the night, (he said,) when deep sleep falleth on men. Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up." An image was before him, but he could not discern its form, and then he gave the utterances of a voice which he heard (Job iv. 12-21). Among the prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel were prominently visited. Ezekiel had visions of heavenly glory. He saw an amber-coloured fiery cloud, out of the midst of which came four creatures, each with four wings and four faces, the faces being those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, and with cloven feet. These darted about like flashes of lightning. Each was accompanied by a wheel "so high" that it was "dreadful," and the "rings," or rims, of these wheels, "were full of eyes round about." The wheels moved as they moved, "for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." The wings of the creatures created a noise "like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host." Over their heads was a firmament "as the colour of the terrible crystal," and above the firmament was the likeness of a sapphire throne, on which was the likeness of a man who was of the colour of amber fire. "This," it is said, "was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Ezekiel, at this awful spectacle, fell flat on his face, but was raised, and then had to "open his mouth" and eat "a roll of a book," written inside and outside with "lamentations, and mourning, and woe," representing messages he was to communicate to the rebellious

Israelites. In another vision a "spirit" of a fiery amber-colour lifted him up by a lock of his head between earth and heaven, and brought him to Jerusalem, and then he saw "the glory of the God of Israel" as on the former occasion. Here he had to witness "abominations," or certain idolatrous practices, and after being charged with sundry wrathful denunciations, the spirit took him up and brought him to Chaldea, where his people were in captivity, and he told them all that had been put before him. At another time, he was brought to a high mountain where there was a "frame of a city." He then saw a number of minute measurements taken of gate-posts, chambers, court-yards, porches, &c., connected with the temple and its associated buildings, after which the vision he had first seen re-appeared. The spirit took him up and brought him into the inner court, "and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house," and a number of detailed instructions for carrying out sacrificial worship were given him. The inheritance of the Israelites, and the partition thereof among their tribes, was also described and laid down. Daniel was one who "had understanding in all visions and dreams." The king of Babylon had been troubled by a dream, the particulars of which had not fixed themselves on his memory. His wise men undertook to interpret the dream, but to discover what the dream itself was lay beyond their powers. On this the king became "very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon." Daniel was in peril with the rest, but "the secret" was "revealed" to him "in a night vision." He afterwards saw in a vision a fight between a ram and a he-goat, and certain consequences connected with their horns, which it was explained to him represented the struggles of the Medes and Persians with the Greeks for empire, and the sequel, which was to embrace the end of all things. Again he saw the vision of a man whose face was "as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." This personage described to him certain struggles in which he was engaged. He said, "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia." After

which, one with "the appearance of a man" touched the prophet and said, "Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come;—and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."

Visions. New Testament.

In the New Testament such visitations also occur. Cornelius had a vision of an angel coming to him, and telling him to send for Peter, describing that "he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side." The next day, as his messengers were nearing the city where Peter resided, Peter fell into a trance, and saw, as it were, a sheet let down to the earth filled with all sorts of four-footed animals, insects, and birds, clean and unclean, which he was told to kill and eat; and, on his objecting, he was rebuked, and the operation of presenting these creatures to him as food was performed three times. When Cornelius's messengers had arrived, "the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee," and he was told to go to them without hesitation. On which Peter went to Cornelius and preached Jesus successfully to him and those with him, which was the object of the vision. As Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians there, a strong light was thrown upon him from heaven, and a voice was heard by him warning him to desist from his purpose. He then became blind for three days. At the same time one Ananias of Damascus was visited by "the Lord in a vision," and told to go and restore Paul to sight. Paul then became a convert to Christianity. Paul had two other visions. One was to induce him to go and preach in Macedonia, and the other to continue preaching in Corinth. The Apocalypse is full of visions bestowed upon the writer John. The first set relate to things of earth, namely, to the condition of seven out of the various congregations of Christians at that time established. The next set relate to things in heaven. "A door," he tells us, "was opened in heaven," and a voice "as it were of a trumpet," said to him, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." On this, objects, such as were brought before Ezekiel and Daniel, were presented to him, namely, a resplendent throne with one sitting on it, winged beasts full of eyes, and resembling various animals,

and monsters of still more formidable shape; and with this sort of imagery, and with angelic forms, various scenes are enacted before him, purporting to be of prophetic import.

False visions.

At the same time, persons not really visited by God might come forward with false representations "speaking a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord," prophesying "a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart, of whom he may say, I sent them not" (Jer. xiv. 14, 15; xxiii. 16). And, furthermore, in times when the nation misbehaved, true visions were to be withheld. Then "night," it was said, "shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God" (Micah iii. 6, 7). "They shall seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients" (Ezek. vii. 26). "The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord" (Lam. ii. 9).

Apparitions of angels. Old Test.

We advance to angelic manifestations. "The angel of the Lord" appeared to Hagar when she fled from Sarah's ill usage of her to the wilderness, and comforted her with promises; and he "called" to her "out of heaven" when she was again in distress, ejected, with her son, out of Abraham's household at Sarah's instance. Two angels visited Lot at Sodom and there excited the unnatural lusts of the people of that place. An angel called to Abraham "out of heaven," warning him that he was not to carry into actual execution God's order to him to sacrifice his son. When Abraham sent his servant to procure a wife for his son, he assured him that God would depute an angel to go before him and direct him. When Jacob was on his way home, and had to face his brother Esau, whom he had defrauded and was afraid of, "the angels of God met him." When he was about to bless the sons of Joseph before his death, he referred to an angel who had "redeemed" him "from all evil." When the Egyptians came in pursuit of the Israelites on their leaving Egypt, "the angel of God," who had preceded the camp, now came to the rear, and placed himself between the Israelites and their pursuers. This angel was charged to conduct them to the promised land; and he appears to have been armed with full

authority over them. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will cut them off" (Ex. xxiii. 20-23). "And I will send an angel before thee; for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way" (Ex. xxxiii. 2, 3). When Balaam was riding on an ass, "the angel of the Lord" stood in a narrow pathway, with a wall on either side, with a drawn sword in his hand; and when Balaam had smitten his ass for turning aside, and the ass had remonstrated with him for striking her, and he at length saw what the obstacle was, the angel told him but for the ass so swerving, "surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive." When Joshua was before Jericho, "behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand," who declared himself to be the "captain of the host of the Lord." The angel who had led the Israelites into the promised land came to a place called Bochim, and told them he would not drive out the inhabitants before them, but would leave them to be as "thorns in their sides," and "their gods as a snare unto them." "The angel of the Lord" visited Gideon, and told him he was ordained to "smite the Midianites as one man." "The angel of the Lord" appeared to Manoah and his wife, and promised them their son Samson. He then "does wondrously," and ascends to heaven "in the flame of the altar," where they had offered sacrifice. David took a census of his people. The Lord being angered at this, sent him a message through the prophet Gad, giving him his choice between famine, three months harrying by his enemies, or pestilence. David preferred not being subjected to his enemies. On this "the angel of the Lord" came with a drawn sword and destroyed seventy thousand men of Israel with pestilence. "And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the

Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the thrashing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem." David then remonstrated with God, reminding him that he was the person guilty of numbering of the people; "but as for these sheep," he said, "what have they done?" On this God was willing that David should atone for his sin with a sacrifice, which was performed; after which "the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof." When Elijah was asleep under a juniper tree, an angel touched him, and bade him arise and eat. He found by his side a cake and a cruse of water, of which he partook and lay down again. "The angel of the Lord," touched him a second time, saying, "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." Ahaziah, the king of Israel, had injured himself by falling out of an upper window, and sent to an idol to know whether he was to recover. "The angel of the Lord," in consequence, visited Elijah, directing him to intimate to the king that for this transgression he should die. The king sent for Elijah, who called down fire from heaven and destroyed two successive companies, who came to take him before the king. A third company was sent, and "the angel of the Lord" came and told Elijah that he might go with them. In the time of king Hezekiah, the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem. "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and four score and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were thrown into a fiery furnace, a fourth appeared among them, who, in "form," was "like the son of God." He is described as an angel sent for their deliverance. When Daniel was thrown into a den of lions, "God sent his angel" to "shut the lions' mouths," so that they did not hurt him. An angel visited the prophet Zechariah, and showed him various things.

This angel conversed with God, and then "talked" with Zechariah with good and comfortable words. As this angel "went forth," "another angel went out to meet him." The angel came again and waked Zechariah, as it were out of sleep.

Apparitions of angels. New Testament.

The angel Gabriel, who represented himself as privileged to "stand in the presence of God," appeared to Zacharias, and promised him his son John the Baptist. The same angel appeared to Mary, and promised her her son Jesus. "The angel of the Lord" appeared to Joseph in a dream, and told him that the pregnancy of his virgin wife was by conception "of the Holy Ghost." On the night of the birth of Jesus, an angel came and announced the event to some shepherds who were out with their flocks, "and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." An angel periodically troubled the water of the pool of Bethesda, to impart to it power to cure the first sick man who might plunge in. After the devil, who had been trying to tempt Jesus, "left him," "behold angels came and ministered unto him." And when he was breaking down in the mount of Olives, just before his crucifixion, "there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him." An angel appeared and fortified Paul when he had to appear before Cæsar. The woman, or women, who went to the sepulchre where Jesus was laid after his death, saw one or more angels on the spot, and had communication with them. When the apostles were put in prison, "the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth." When Peter was in prison, "the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side," bidding him get up, put on his garment, and follow him quickly. "The angel of the Lord" appeared to Philip, and told him to go in a certain direction, and by so doing he met with a certain eunuch, whom he converted and baptised. An angel in a vision came to Cornelius, and bid him send for Peter, who came and converted and baptised him and his household. "The angel of the Lord" smote Herod for personal ostentation, and killed him. Some, we are told, in receiving guests, may unconsciously be entertaining angels. Little children have angels appointed to them, who "always behold the face" of God in heaven. The seven churches of the Apocalypse had each an

angel attached to them, who had to watch over them and answer for their shortcomings. The favoured dead, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, are carried by angels to blissful resting-places; and they are, in short, "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." When the Divine Majesty holds solemn state on appointed occasions, they present themselves before him, as we are twice told in Job; and they are to swell the train of Jesus when he takes to himself his great power and reigns on earth.

Evil angels.

But some of these angelic beings are of a stamp in no way to be trusted. They are said to have cohabited with the daughters of men on whom they procreated a race of giants. Women, apparently because liable to such invasion, when "praying or prophesying," are to have their heads covered, in order to "have power" on their heads "because of the angels;" and those who have thus transgressed, not keeping "their first estate," but "going after strange flesh," are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness" unto the day of judgment.

Satan.

The human race have a great adversary in the world of spirits, who is called Satan. On the occasion when God is enthroned in state, he is said to appear before him among the heavenly hosts, and to use his opportunity to work evil on his human victims. He is described as "the prince of this world," which is "lying in wickedness," or rather "in the wicked one;" "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The prophet Zechariah declared that the angel who appeared to him showed him "Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." He appeared personally to Jesus, removing him bodily from place to place, and endeavouring to bring him under allegiance to himself. And in the end an angel is to "lay hold on him," "bind him" for "a thousand years," "cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him;" after which he is to be let loose for a while, and then, with his angels, is to be cast into a "lake of fire and brimstone," and there "tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Apparitions of

There are also apparitions of God himself. "The Lord appeared unto Abram," making him promises. When he was

"ninety years old and nine" he again "appeared" to him, renewing these promises. After this he "appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre." "Lo," it is said, "three men stood by him." Abraham's speech was apparently addressed to but one of the three, as he used the singular number, "My Lord," and two of the three, who afterwards went away to Sodom, are then called angels. Abraham treated these as guests, supplying them with water to wash their feet, and food, consisting of cakes, butter, milk, and veal, of which they partook. His son Isaac was then promised him, and afterwards he ventured to intercede for Sodom, proposing that the place should be spared if fifty righteous men should be found in it; and then, improving the terms, lowered the number on whose account the threatened judgment was to be remitted to forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, and finally to ten, below which he did not venture to go. "The Lord appeared" to Isaac when in Gerar, telling him not to go to Egypt in a time of famine, and then renewing the promises to him. Jacob was on his way home from Chaldea with his family, and flocks, and herds. He had sent the whole across a ford of the river Jordan, when an adventure befell him. "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This personage was, however, unable to overpower the patriarch, till he "touched the hollow of his thigh," and put it "out of joint as he wrestled with him." Still Jacob would not let him go till he had blessed him, and at the conclusion he called the place Peniel; "for," he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Jacob informed Joseph of another vision he had had of God. "God Almighty," he said, "appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." This seemingly was his vision of the ladder reaching to heaven, when "the Lord stood above it," and addressed him, which happened at Luz. Moses had frequent manifestations of God's personal presence. When he received from God his commission to deliver his kinsfolk out of Egypt, "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush," and then "Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." After this, Moses, in recounting God's appearance upon Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, says to the Israelites, "The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the

God. Old Testament.

fire. I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount." Who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?" Adverting to this, Moses, in subsequently pleading with God, said that the surrounding nations had "heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face," though elsewhere it is said they then saw "no manner of similitude." But some ventured to go up into the mount, and had an actual view of God. "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink." But on a subsequent occasion, when Moses was desirous of having a view of the glory of God, a partial exhibition was all that was allowed him. "Thou canst not," he was then told, "see my face; for there shall no man see me and live.—I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen." And so "the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord, and the Lord passed before him." Aaron, Moses was informed, might see him, but only on stated occasions, when he had to officiate before the ark. "I will appear," God declared, "in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." Moses was more intimately honoured. On one occasion his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, had been taking him to task on account of his marriage with an Ethiopian woman, "and the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam," and rebuking them for venturing to contend with Moses, he said, "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold." "And there arose not," it is declared, after the death of Moses, "a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." Manoah looked upon the

angel who came to himself and his wife as a manifestation of God. "We shall surely die," he said to his wife, "because we have seen God." "In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night," when he bestowed upon him wealth and wisdom. When he had built the temple, "the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon." "I saw the Lord," declared Micaiah, "sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left," and then he recounted what passed in conversation between God and those with him. It is the same scene as twice described in Job. Isaiah had such a vision. "In the year that king Uzziah died," he tells us, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." So also Ezekiel. "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above it." And so Daniel. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

Apparitions of God. New Testament.

So also John. "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." To a place of honour by that throne Jesus is said to have been translated. When brought, just before his crucifixion, before the high priest, he said, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power;" and after his death and resurrection, "he was received up into heaven," we are assured, "and sat on the right hand of God." And just before his own martyrdom, Stephen was vouchsafed a sight of him. "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." He "is set," declares Paul, "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." But he is to have a special throne

of his own. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." "To him that overcometh," he declares, "will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

And yet, notwithstanding all these declared manifestations, we are assured that "no man hath seen God at any time," that he dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." Jesus, however, has exhibited himself as his personal representative, so one with him in every respect as actually to be him. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, show us the Father?" Of those who went against him he said, "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Paul accordingly declares him to be "the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," to whom all who trust in him are to be conformed. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." "Now," says Paul again, "we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." The church is said to be "his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." "Beloved," adds John, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Jesus manifested as God.

But the most important in its consequences of all the miraculous manifestations said to have been vouchsafed to man, are those which are centred in the person of Jesus. He is stated to have been born of a virgin by conception of the Holy Ghost, to have been raised from the dead, and to have ascended bodily into heaven. To the accomplishment of this history the whole earlier dispensation in types, ordinances, doctrines, and prophetic annunciations is declared to point; and on the acceptance of its facts the being and ultimate hopes of the Christian altogether depend.

Miracles connected with person of Jesus.

P.—You have certainly put before me a startling asssemblage of miraculous exhibitions. I was not prepared for this. Am I expected to believe the whole?

Acceptance of miracles.

S.—You must do so if you are to believe the Bible to be of God. To allow any one the liberty of making his selection among the facts of the Bible, so as to say what he is prepared to accept as true, and what he rejects as otherwise, is to undermine the foundations of the book, and to place it on no better level than any common volume. Besides, where is the line to be drawn for the exercise of such liberty? One man may question ten of the miracles, another twenty, a third a hundred, until perhaps some one may not accept ten out of the whole collection, or even any, and yet profess to look on the book itself as of divine authority. But, in truth, as I think you must see, the Bible teems with the miraculous from one end to the other; and to cut this element out of it is to take from it the very life of the book, as a book from God, leaving nothing remaining but an empty shell of humanistic construction and character.

P.—You assuredly drive me into a corner. I had hoped that I might have questioned, on their very face, such statements as that a serpent, or a donkey, held conversation with human beings; that rods were turned into serpents, and serpents into rods; that an iron axe-head floated on the water; that an angel was in the habit of coming down from heaven to stir up a pool of water, in order that the first man who might throw himself in might be cured of any ailment he might happen to have; that a dead man was brought to life by accidentally touching another dead man's bones; and that persons were cured of any disease they might have by contact with other people's handkerchiefs, or by the shadows of other persons passing over them.

Liberty of judgment.

S.—You are not permitted to approach the subject in that sort of spirit of questioning. If you test a statement in the Bible simply by your own sense of its propriety or probability, you will be considered setting yourself up as judging its alleged divine author. Are you prepared to go that length?

P.—Certainly I would not venture to judge God in respect of anything that I could clearly look upon as his work. For

example, I would not question the fitness of his scheme of creation, including all that I see of it around me on earth, or in the heavens. Or, to come closer home, to what I know of more intimately, I would not challenge God on the constitution of my own being, or the circumstance of my existence. He has made me, and I must be content to be, and to be what I am. I feel myself frail in person, infirm in mind and purpose, erring in thought and action, but I would not dare to say, why did you not constitute me in better form, or with attributes as perfect as your own? Admiring God in his works, I can fully trust him to carry out all his purposes, knowing they will in the end prove worthy of him. I am an atom in his creation, and assuredly will not be overlooked, neglected, or abandoned. But at present we have to deal with a certain book, in regard to which I have no such solid evidence that it is one of his works, in the sense that I accept the other objects I have referred to as his creation. Men do make books, and this may be a mere human work. It is not an object such as a tree, a river, or a mountain, in the production of which I know man can have had no part. I have to satisfy myself, out of the multitude of books which there are in the world, whether this one book has been produced by God, and not by man. If it were a house, for instance, of which I was told, among the many houses of human construction which there are, that this particular one was built by God, and not by man, I should consider myself at liberty to go over it, and to judge whether it had been laid out on a human plan, or exhibited signs and defects such as appear in human workmanship, as in the selection of material, in measurements, fittings, occurrence of flaws, tool marks, &c. If I may not examine the Bible in the same manner, and with the same purpose of ascertaining the truth of its pretensions to be a work of God, I know not how I am to really satisfy myself on the subject. I was not born in the system of the Bible as you or others may have been. It comes to me as a new work, and if I may not exercise what faculties I possess in judging of its contents, I shall have to accept it on credit, without judgment of my own. I have no direct channel that I know of whereby I may receive testimony of the authorship from the reputed author himself, and therefore I should have to rely on the testimony of my fellowmen. In other

words, I should have first to believe in man, and then, through man, in the Bible.

S.—I admit the dilemma, and cannot but allow that you have no proper course but to proceed with the examination, and in this I am prepared to help you to my best.

P.—Thank you. Be good enough to lend me your paper containing the account of these miracles, which I will look carefully over, and then ask you for any explanations I may require.

S.—Here it is, quite at your service.

MIRACLES.

IV.

RENEWED CONVERSATION.

PUNDIT.—I have looked over your paper, and will now make such remarks on its contents as occur to me.

General remarks.

I notice, in the works of creation, even among those objects which we call, by comparison, insignificant, nothing which betrays poverty of thought or meanness of conception. All, on the contrary, is of surpassing excellence, exhibiting the ideas and the workmanship of a being immeasurably superior to ourselves. The minutest insect, the leaf of a tree, or a drop of rain, involve plans and performances far beyond man to devise or execute. But when I turn to these narratives of wonders which you have put before me, a very different sort of impression is created in my mind. Some of the miracles enacted look like mere efforts at display,—the doing things out of the way in an ostentatious manner, just to show what the performer was capable of. For example, the employing a lion to kill a disobedient prophet, and bears to kill mocking children; ravens to carry food to a man; a whale to swallow a man, and then to throw him up again alive; dividing the Red Sea and the river Jordan, to give passages across; walking on the sea; sending one man to get cured by bathing in the Jordan, and another in the pool of Siloam; an angel ascending to heaven in a flame; a man translated to heaven in a chariot and horses of fire; parading round Jericho, trumpeting and shouting for the magic overthrow of its walls; making the sun and moon to stand still relatively to the earth, and the shadow of the sun to go backwards; and deputing a moving star to guide men on a journey. Others, again, are of a different complexion, and spring from poor, low, and puerile ideas. I

have already pointed to some such; namely, the talking animals, the rod and serpent feats, the floating iron, the stirring up of the pool of Bethesda, and the marvels wrought by Elisha's bones, Paul's handkerchiefs, and Peter's shadow. I may further instance, as of a like sort, the getting tribute-money out of a fish's mouth,—the hook snapped at, and the coin nevertheless held fast; a divine being fluttering about as a dove, or descending in a shower of fiery tongues; devils entering swine; the operations on Gideon's fleece; the burning bush; and the cursing of a fig-tree. In other instances the acts are so similar in description as to amount to mere imitative repetitions, indicating poverty of conception to devise miraculous forms. Such are the talking animals; the frequent rod and serpent feats; the conversion of water at one time into blood, at another into wine; the dividing the Red Sea and the Jordan, the latter three several times; the healing persons by means of the Jordan, and the pools of Bethesda and Siloam, and three times by the spittle of Jesus; the sending fire down frequently in acceptance of sacrificial offerings; the consuming the people of Sodom, Nadab and Abihu, the Israelites in the wilderness, the followers of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the two companies who came after Elijah, all by fire from heaven; the perpetuating the supply from one widow's handful of meal and cruse of water, and another widow's pot of oil; the multiplying food, at one time for a hundred men, at another for five thousand, and at a third for four thousand; the stopping the course of the sun, and the sending him back on his course. Now, if the object of a miracle is to exhibit God in some special and transcendant manner, it is quite defeated when the actions attributed to him put him before us in a poor or unworthy aspect, such as even a human being, having due regard to the estimation of his fellow-men, would be loth to display himself in.

STUDENT.—I cannot but allow that your strictures are generally just, and that the instances you have selected bear the characteristics you impute to them. Their proper fitness must of course depend upon their adaptation to the circumstances surrounding them.

P.—Then let us judge somewhat of these circumstances. Why was a serpent made use of to converse with Eve?

The serpent in Eden.

S.—With us evil is suggested to us readily by the action of our own thoughts ; but it was not so with our first parents, Adam and Eve. God, after establishing the whole creation, pronounced of it, that all was good. Eve thus had not the impulse within her to go wrong which we have. God wished to put her and Adam upon probation. They were at that time so innocent as not to know good from evil. The object was to present evil to them, and to see how they would receive it. As evil could not suggest itself to them from their own thoughts, it had to be put before them from outside, and the serpent was employed for the purpose. God gave them a certain command, and the serpent induced them to break it.

P.—The experiment seems to me an extraordinary one and scarcely fair. If Eve did not know good from evil, how should she be able to decide whether it was best for her to attend to what God had addressed to her, or to what the serpent had said ? She was without power of discernment.

S.—That I cannot explain to you.

P.—Did the serpent know that he was leading Eve to do evil ?

S.—Assuredly he did. What he said is stated to have proceeded from his great subtlety. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field."

P.—Then there was subtlety among the beasts of the field, and this was the most subtle of them all ?

S.—Apparently so.

P.—But I thought the whole creation was pronounced solidly good. How then can evil have been thus prevailing among the beasts ?

S.—I cannot tell you.

P.—If the serpent and the other beasts were thus subtle, which, I take it, means sly and artful, able to pervert good into evil, then they at all events had a knowledge of good and evil, and were, so far, more highly organised than the human beings who were the lords of the creation.

S.—So it would certainly seem. The serpent, however, who overreached and misled Eve, is currently thought to have been the devil appearing to her in the form of a serpent.

P.—Is it so said in the Bible ?

S.—It is not. The devil is however adverted to as "that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world."

P.—The use of a mere phrase of that sort does not appear to me to warrant the idea that the devil was the actual serpent in Eden. The circumstance of there having been such a serpent as the one that tempted Eve, may, in truth, have suggested the application of the term serpent to the devil as a mere epithet. If we may say that this Eden serpent, who is described distinctly as a beast of the field, and is spoken of relatively to the other beasts of the field, even as to their common attribute of subtlety, was in truth the personation of a being from quite another sphere, called the devil, then we certainly should be making an addition to the words of the Bible, which we are cautioned against venturing to do at the peril of our salvation.

S.—I admit that we are without warrant for saying that the serpent in Eden was other than what it is described to have been, namely, a beast of the terrestrial creation.

P.—What was the result to the parties concerned ensuing from this probation ?

S.—Adam and Eve were condemned to toil, suffering, and death ; and the serpent was thenceforth to progress upon his belly, and to eat dust.

P.—It seems to me that the heaviest punishment fell on those upon whom no human judge could have charged guilt. In what way was the sentence carried out against the serpent ?

S.—He certainly moves on his belly, but I cannot say that he feeds on dust. He eats small animals, birds, frogs, and insects.

P.—Apparently, from his form, he never could have moved otherwise than on his belly. Had he, before this event, a different form ?

S.—No ; not according to the observation we can make. Ages before the event in Eden, serpent forms, such as we now see, are found to have been deposited in strata of the earth. They have been discovered, for example, in the London clay, which is the lowest of what are called the tertiary deposits.[1]

P.—And, without speaking of eels and water snakes, there

[1] The "Testimony of the Rocks," by Hugh Miller, 82.

are the worms of the earth, which are equally reduced to going upon their bellies, and yet cannot be associated with the event in Eden.

S.—That is true. There is a whole class of this description which are called Annelides. Remains of some of gigantic size, having the thickness of a man's arm, have been found in the Old Red Sandstone, a deposit of vast antiquity, belonging to what is termed the Devonian era.[1]

P.—Earthworms certainly move in a painful manner, but then they are formed for burrowing in the earth rather than going over its surface. The serpent's movements, on the contrary, are quick and graceful, and not at all such as one would think to have been imposed upon him by way of punishment.

S.—Yes, he certainly is quite unimpeded in his movements. We have but few of the species in my part of the world, but I will read you some extracts I have made which describe his powers of locomotion. "Serpents," says Professor Owen, "are too commonly looked down upon as animals degraded from a higher type; but their whole organisation, and especially their bony structure, demonstrate that their parts are as exquisitely adjusted to the form of their whole, and to their habits and sphere of life, as is the organisation of any animal which we call inferior to them. It is true that the serpent has no limbs, yet it can outclimb the monkey, outswim the fish, outleap the jerboa, and, suddenly losing the close coils of its crouching spiral, it can spring into the air, and seize the bird upon the wing: all these creatures have been observed to fall its prey. The serpent has neither hands nor talons, yet it can outwrestle the athlete, and crush the tiger in the embrace of its ponderous overlapping folds. Instead of licking up its food as it glides along, the serpent uplifts its crushed prey, and presents it, grasped in the death-coil as in a hand, to its slimy gaping mouth. It is truly wonderful to see the work of hands, feet, and fins, performed by a modification of the vertebrate column."[2] Another observer describes the movements of a large black snake he saw "sliding stealthily through the branches" in pursuit of birds. "That a legless, wingless

[1] "Past and Present Life of the Globe," by Dr Page, 94.
[2] On the Vertebrates.

creature, should move with such ease and rapidity where only birds and squirrels are considered at home, lifting himself up, letting himself down, running out on the yielding boughs, and traversing with marvellous celerity the whole length and breadth of the thicket, was truly surprising. I could but admire his terrible beauty, his black, shining folds, his easy, gliding movement, head erect, eyes glistening, tongue playing like subtle flame, and the invisible means of his almost winged locomotion."[1]

P.—Well, it is evident that the serpent's form is one of the many wonderful structures by which God adapts means to ends, and is not a malformation, designed to incapacitate the animal by way of punishment for transgression. It is apparent also that the present has always been his proper form, and that his method of progressing on his belly did not originate in Eden. The account of the use made of the serpent in Eden is wanting therefore, as far as I can see, in accuracy as well as fitness.

Balaam's ass.

Let us pass to the talking donkey. Please to tell me the circumstances under which this phenomenon was exhibited.

S.—The Israelites, on their way to the land promised them, had encamped in the plains of Moab. The Moabites were alarmed and distressed at the presence of such a host. Their king then sent for Balaam, a prophet, to come and curse them, hoping thereby to have power to drive them out. The messengers were princes of the land, and took with them for Balaam "the rewards of divination." Balaam, however, said he could not go without first learning what was the will of God. On this God is said to have come to him, and to have told him not to go, for the people were to be blessed, not cursed. Balaam consequently refused to accompany the king's messengers. On this the king sent him persons of still greater consequence, with high offers of honour and wealth. Balaam replied that no amount of gold and silver would tempt him to disobey God, whom, however, he said he would again consult. On this God told him to go, but to say only what he might dictate to him. Balaam accordingly went, but God's anger was kindled against him for going, and an angel was sent with a drawn sword to meet him on the way. Balaam did not at

[1] "With the Birds," in the Atlantic Monthly.

first see the angel, but the ass on which he rode did, and refused to move forward, crushing Balaam's foot against a wall. On this Balaam struck her three times, and thereupon "the Lord opened the mouth of the ass," and she expostulated with him. The angel afterwards told Balaam that but for the ass swerving as she had done, he would have killed him. Balaam then apologised, and offered to go back, but the angel told him to go on, but to say only what he might put into his mouth. Balaam accordingly goes forward, and when the king bids him curse the Israelites, he blesses them abundantly. The king repeats the experiment twice more, but Balaam utters nothing but blessings for Israel, and finally, he denounces judgment on his own people. On this he is expelled from the king's presence with dishonour.

P.—Did no particular results follow from the utterances of the ass?

S.—None. They were of a very commonplace kind, relating to her own past services and docility as an ass, and led to nothing.

P.—I cannot at all make out what opening there was for the intervention of the angel, or for the ass being gifted with speech. Nothing, as far as I can judge, could be more unexceptionable than the conduct of Balaam.

Lions, bears, and ravens.

There was a lion which killed a deceived prophet, and two bears which killed a number of children, and one prophet was preserved from lions into whose den he had been thrown, and another was fed by ravens. Did any results ensue from the control thus exercised over these animals?

S.—None that I can point to. They were simple incidents which led to nothing in particular. Those killed were of course so disposed of, and the prophets favoured were men of God before, and remained so.

P.—Did any one witness the act of the ravens feeding Elijah, so as to note how God cared for his people?

S.—No; that happened in a desert place.

P.—But when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, many must have been cognizant of that fact. Were any of these brought to God by seeing how wonderfully he had protected the prophet?

S.—The king Darius was altogether on Daniel's side, and

when he came out scathless from the lions' den, he issued a proclamation that all his people should worship Daniel's God. Nothing, however, apparently came of this, for they continued idolaters to the end.

Jonah and the whale.

P.—What are the incidents connected with Jonah being swallowed by a whale?

S.—Jonah was commissioned by God to denounce judgment upon Nineveh, because of their wickedness. But he fled from God, and took shipping for Tarshish. God overtook him with a tempest, and the vessel being in danger, the people cast lots to know on whose account the storm had been sent, and the lot fell on Jonah. On questioning him, he confessed that he was flying "from the presence of the Lord," and he told them that if they threw him into the sea it would become calm. The sailors were reluctant to do this, and tried to save the vessel by rowing hard. Not, however, succeeding, they implored God that they might not all perish because of one man, and praying him not to "lay upon" them his "innocent blood," as in fact the deed was God's, they threw Jonah into the sea. Immediately there was a calm, and the Lord having "prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah," he was accordingly so swallowed. Then he prayed to God "out of the fish's belly;" and after being there three days and three nights, "the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

P.—This seems to me a very childish story. How could a man attempt to "flee from God," who is everywhere? A prophet, professing to have direct intercourse with God, could not have been without this universal knowledge.

S.—I am not able to reply to this.

P.—How could Jonah know that the sea would become calm if he were thrown into it? The sailors looked upon the act as a criminal one, which it undoubtedly was, asking God, in a most extraordinary way, to take the guilt of the "innocent blood" upon himself, and not throw it upon them. Certainly, if any one in these days told you that he was "fleeing from the presence of God," that God had consequently caught him up with this storm, and that it would be assuaged if he were thrown into the sea, you would set him down as gone mad, and treat him accordingly.

S.—I have no explanation to offer on these heads.

P.—I see in your paper you call the great fish which swallowed Jonah a whale. Have you warrant for this?

S.—Yes, it is so specified in Matt. xii. 40.

P.—In what sea was the whale found?

S.—In the Mediterranean.

P.—Is that a place frequented by whales?

S.—No, it is an inland sea, nearly land-locked, and too warm a region for whales. They are only met with in parts of the ocean much more north or much more south.

P.—I presume a whale was selected for swallowing Jonah, because of its great capacity, giving him space to move about in its belly as if he had been in a chamber.

S.—Apparently so; but in making the selection the smallness of its swallow has been overlooked.

P.—What about that?

S.—Why, the whale lives by sucking in small marine animals of about the size of the end of your finger, and has a swallow only in proportion to the size of its food.

P.—Then Jonah could not have gone down the whale's throat after all.

S.—Certainly not down that of any such as we know of.

P.—For whose benefit was this miracle enacted?

S.—Much is made of it in the New Testament, where it is referred to repeatedly by Jesus as the type of his own burial and resurrection, but there appear to have been no witnesses to it to be impressed at the time with the occurrence. The Ninevites, to whom Jonah was commissioned, were far off inland, and the sailors had been parted with three days before Jonah was cast on shore by the whale.

P.—It was an exhibition then enacted without persons to whom to exhibit it.

The exodus. Narrative.

Be good enough now to recount to me the circumstances under which the Israelites had a passage made for them through the Red Sea, and were supported for so many years in the wilderness with food from heaven.

S.—Jacob and his family had migrated to Egypt in a time of famine. They were at first well used by the rulers of Egypt, but they increased prodigiously in numbers so as from seventy males (Gen. xlvi. 27) to swell, in the fourth generation (Gen. xv. 16), to a population of two or three millions. The succeeding kings consequently became apprehensive that they might master the empire. The Israelites, who occupied a district called Goshen, were then oppressed, and put to hard labour as bondsmen, in order to keep them down. The patriarchs had been promised that their descendants should be thus multiplied, and that they should have possession of the land in which they themselves roamed about as strangers and pilgrims. The land to be given them was described as flowing with milk and honey, so abundant was to be their prosperity in it, but the actual occupants had first to be got rid of. The set time having come for fulfilling these promises, Moses was deputed by God to deliver the people out of Egypt, and to conduct them to their inheritance, and his brother Aaron was joined with him in the mission. God performed sundry wonders before Moses by way of giving him his credentials, and Moses at length, after attempting to avoid the task assigned him, consented to undertake it. The plan laid down was this. The Lord says to Moses, "When thou goest to return unto Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he should not let the people go." Then there comes an interlude, which is thus described: "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him," but Moses is saved by his wife Zipporah circumcising their son. Moses and Aaron after this go before Pharaoh with their message from God, which was this: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh asks who this God was whom he was to obey, when they reply, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." Pharaoh refuses, and lays heavier burdens on the people, saying that it was out of mere idleness that they pretended to want to go forth to sacrifice. Moses thereupon reproaches God with these results, saying, "Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." God bids him proceed with his errand, but Moses seriously objects.

Then the Lord encourages him, saying, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh," and adds, "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments." Pharaoh, when again addressed, asks for a miracle. Aaron then performs the rod and serpent feat before him, and Pharaoh's magicians do the like. On this God "hardened Pharaoh's heart," and he, of course, refuses the request made of him. Aaron then turns all the waters of Egypt in their "streams," "rivers," "ponds," and "pools" into blood, and the magicians do the like, and Pharaoh's heart continued hardened, "as the Lord had said." After this Aaron called frogs into being, and "covered the land of Egypt" with them, and the magicians did the same. Pharaoh then says, that if the frogs are removed he will "let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord." The frogs are killed off, but Pharaoh's heart becomes again hardened, "as the Lord had said." After this the dust of the land is changed into lice. The magicians try to execute this miracle, but fail. Pharaoh, however, remains as hardened as before. Then swarms of flies are sent, the land of Goshen, however, where the Israelites are, being kept free. Pharaoh, upon this, sends for Moses and Aaron, and says they may perform their sacrifice where they were. They explain that they cannot do so in Egypt, but must "go three days' journey into the wilderness," and sacrifice as God "shall command" them. When the flies were removed, Pharaoh's hardness of heart returned. Then a murrain was sent "upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep" of the Egyptians; "and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one." Pharaoh continued hardened. Then a boil was sent "upon man and upon beast throughout all the land of Egypt, and the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians." Still Pharaoh remained hardened, "as the Lord had spoken unto Moses." God then sent a threatening message to Pharaoh, saying, "In very deed for this cause have I raised

thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." After this, destruction by hail was threatened upon all who did not take shelter from it, and there came the storm of "thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground," "upon man and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt," "and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." Pharaoh begged to be spared, but directly the visitation was over, his heart was hardened, "as the Lord had spoken by Moses." Then the Lord sent Moses to him again, premising, however, and saying, "I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show my signs before him; that ye may know that I am the Lord." After this locusts were threatened, which should eat up all that had escaped the hail. Pharaoh then said that they might go, but asked who were to go. Moses said, all must go, old and young, with all their flocks and herds, to "hold a feast unto the Lord." Pharaoh said the men only might go, and then drove them from his presence. The locusts accordingly came, and devoured every green thing that remained in the land. Pharaoh succumbed, but directly the plague was removed hardened his heart again. After this darkness was sent, "even darkness which may be felt." "And there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Pharaoh then offered to let all go but the cattle, but Moses insisted that "not an hoof" should "be left behind," saying these were necessary for "sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God." Pharaoh, however, again got hardened, and said he would kill Moses if he troubled him with his presence again. On this God told Moses that he had "one plague more" for Pharaoh, the effect of which would be that he would be glad to get rid of them, and would "thrust" them out "altogether." God then told him, preparatory to this exodus, to "let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold;" and he promised to favour the measure. After this, "at midnight, the Lord smote all the firstborn in

the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle." This caused a great wailing among the Egyptians, "for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Then Pharaoh gave the Israelites leave to "go and serve the Lord," as they had said, taking with them their flocks and herds, and, notwithstanding all that had happened, asking Moses and Aaron to leave him their blessing. The people were off immediately, but first, "according to the word of Moses, they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required, and they spoiled the Egyptians." They thus went out "a mixed multitude," with "very much cattle." God led them out, showing them the way with a pillar of cloud by day, and one of fire by night. He would not, however, take them "through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near," being apprehensive, should "they see war," that they might "return to Egypt;" but he took them "through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." God thus brought them to the sea-side, and then said, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord." Upon this Pharaoh came in pursuit with his horses and chariots, and overtook them. Pharaoh was behind, and the sea in front, and the Israelites were in great fear. Then God told Moses to command the children of Israel to go forward, and to lift up his rod, and stretch his hand over the sea, and divide it, which Moses accordingly did; and by means of a strong wind, which blew all night, the sea was thrown back, "and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." The Egyptians incautiously followed, but in some way God "took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily;" upon which, by God's command, Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the waters returned to their place and engulphed Pharaoh and all his host, so that "there remained not so much as one of them." The Israelites were then led into the

wilderness, and kept wandering there for forty years. During this lengthened period they were fed with manna from heaven, and occasionally water was drawn for them out of the rocks. All this time, moreover, their "raiment waxed not old," neither did their feet "swell," nor did their "shoes wax old upon their feet." And after this long pilgrimage, Jordan was miraculously divided for them, and passing across its dry bed they entered the promised land.

P. Is the whole of this wonderful story generally believed?

S. It is so, implicitly, by multitudes, and in fact is viewed as the foundation of God's dealings with the Israelites and the corner stone of their faith.

P. You surprise me. The narrative seems to me to team with improbabilities, and at every turn to give a false representation of the characteristics of God.

S. Please then to state your objections to this history.

General criticisms.

P. It seems incredible to me that the offspring of seventy men should have mounted up to two or three millions in four generations; that after Moses was satisfied he had come into personal communication with God, the enactment of wonders before him was considered necessary to prove to him what God was capable of doing; that while he must have been aware of the promises made to the patriarchs, and that the set time for fulfilling them had arrived, and found himself selected as God's honoured agent for fulfilling these promises, he should then have attempted to evade this duty, notwithstanding that God had thus specially revealed himself to him in power; and that, although thus selected and commissioned for this important task, God should have waylaid him and sought to kill him in an inn, but was turned aside from this purpose by his wife. These are positions so much at variance with all reasonable probability that I cannot think they belong to any true history.

Then I find it impossible to believe that God would cause sufferings for the mere purpose of displaying his power; or that, for any end, he could deliberately lay such plans for the destruction of Pharaoh and his people as are here described. Before any message is sent to Pharaoh, God is said to concert with Moses his ruin. He says he will send the message, and then harden Pharaoh's heart that he may disobey it, upon

which he will proceed to punish him without mercy ; and that such was the process is carefully explained, stage by stage, through all these horrible visitations; and even if Pharaoh had been in wilful resistance, why should so many innocent persons, and harmless animals, have been involved in suffering because of his guilt ? In the last act of killing off the first-born, every family in the land was struck at, the blow falling even upon the poor helpless prisoners in the dungeons. These cannot have been the acts of God. Some man, ignorant of what God really is, must have concocted the tale, thinking to magnify the importance of his own people by alleging such marvellous interventions in their favour.

Then Moses, in going with God's message to Pharaoh, goes really with a lie in his mouth. The object in view is a final evacuation of Egypt, to settle nationally in another land ; and yet he pretends that he merely wants a few days leave for the people, to take them out into the wilderness to sacrifice to God ; adding the further falsehood, that this was to avert the wrath of God, "lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." And this misrepresentation is kept up throughout the whole ordeal. The movement contemplated was a most important one. Pharaoh had to part with a host of bondsmen, who represented so much property inherited by him from his predecessors. Compensation, especially from the inexhaustible treasury of God's bounty, might have been offered him. The British Government, for instance, in liberating a number of Africans who were in slavery, did so by means of a very heavy payment. At all events, Pharaoh should have been told that this was a movement which God had long before ordained, and was determined to accomplish, and as special hardening of his heart was resorted to in order to ensure his resistance, it is fair to suppose that he might have proved compliant, had he been left to himself, and matters been put before him in their true light. But what was he to make of the pretence of a whole host of people, including women and children, and every head of cattle they possessed, wanting to go out three days journey into the wilderness to sacrifice ? The poor man actually said that they might sacrifice where they were, but this was not agreed to. He could but see that the proposition was a mere device to overreach him, and his resistance, even had

his heart not been subjected to special hardening, was but natural.

Then, in keeping with this duplicity practised upon Pharaoh, was the expedient of taking valuables from his people, on the pretence of borrowing them, when there was no intention of returning what was so borrowed. And this fraud is made a subject of glorification, and called "spoiling the Egyptians." A human judge would visit such an act with severe consequences, and a divine one cannot have had an obtuser sense of right and wrong. But God is said not merely to have countenanced this fraud, but to have counselled and effectuated it. He is represented at one time to be hardening Pharaoh's heart so as to make him a transgressor, and at another to be softening the hearts of his people that they might become the victims of spoliation. It is impossible for me to believe that such action as this came from God.

I observe, further, that on Pharaoh's first refusal to let the people go, Moses does not hesitate to reproach God with the failure. How is this to be reconciled with the alleged plot laid between God and Moses, that Pharaoh's heart should be hardened in order that he might so refuse, and then reap the consequences ? Moreover, is it likely that a human being would venture thus to reproach God, especially such a God as this who had just before aimed at his life, without note or warning, at the inn ? And when God repeated his orders, would he still demur? Moses appears to me to have been far more rebellious than Pharaoh.

Then God is said to have made Moses a god to Pharaoh. What this may mean I am at a loss to think. How was Moses to influence Pharaoh, especially when God was hardening him to resistance ?

Nor can I understand how God should have condescended to enter into competition with Pharaoh's magicians, nor how the contest should for a time have been perfectly equal. Are we to believe that these men could exercise divine power, namely, in converting one substance into another, and in creating animal life ? And if we are to reject their wonders as unreal, what is to prevent our rejecting, as equally unreal, the marvels opposed to theirs ? Neither can I understand the subsequent failure of the magicians. If they could call frogs

into existence, why should they not have been able to create the far more insignificant objects, lice?

There are also some features of detail which seem to me to indicate oversight, and so to show this to be a made up story. If Aaron changed all the waters of Egypt into blood, where was there any for the magicians to operate upon? And if all the cattle of the Egyptians were killed by the murrain, how could there be any to be dealt with by the boils, the hail, and at the slaughter of the firstborn? And how could Pharaoh have found the means of horsing those chariots with which he pursued the Israelites?

Then if the Israelites were anxious to be off into the wilderness at any hazard, and ready to go at a moment's notice, why did they not decamp when not a man of the Egyptians could put foot to ground because of the boils, or when they were involved in such profound darkness that not one could move from his place for three days?

S.—I admit that what you say is well worthy of consideration in weighing the probabilities of this history.

P.—Perhaps there may be more objections of the sort which have occurred to others.

Further criticisms.

S.—There are. Bishop Colenso's first volume is greatly occupied with the subject, which has, in fact, engaged the attention of many before him. I will give you a brief idea of the objections generally urged to the credibility of this narrative. Pharaoh was always changing his mind, at one time refusing the Israelites liberty to go, at another yielding, seemingly, when under the pressure of the plagues with which he was visited. When therefore he finally said they might go, no time was to be lost in acting upon the permission. There was a certain ceremonial appointed at this time, namely, the passover. Lambs were to be sacrificed, and the blood thereof put upon the door posts, seeing which the avenging angel was to pass over the house and strike at the Egyptians who would be without such precaution. The people were to partake of the lamb, and to eat it with their "loins girded," their "shoes on their feet," and their staves "in their hand," ready for an instant march. At midnight the blow was struck. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron at once, during the night, and told them to take the people away, and the Egyptians urged them

to go "in haste," saying, otherwise "We be all dead men." Accordingly the people "took their dough before it was leavened," packed up their kneading troughs "in their clothes upon their shoulders," and took their departure on the instant; finding time, however, to plunder the Egyptians by "borrowing," as the term used is, their valuables. Now it is objected that a population of two or three millions, including persons of both sexes and of all ages, could not have been got off in this rapid manner, in the dead of night, without method, organisation, or consumption of time. They were, it seems, provided with tents (Ex. xvi. 16). "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" exclaimed Balaam, at an early stage of their marchings, as he saw the hosts of the Israelites spread out before him on the plains of Moab (Num. xxiv. 5). And for such equipage what carriage had they, it is asked, seeing they had to transport even their kneading troughs on their own shoulders. They are said to have gone out "harnessed," an expression having no intelligible meaning, but that they were armed for war, in which sense the phrase is used elsewhere (1 Ki. xx. 11); and they are found shortly after leaving Egypt engaged with the Amalekites, whom they discomfited "with the edge of the sword." "God brought him forth out of Egypt," said Balaam, viewing their material force; "he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with arrows" (Num. xxiv. 8). Being hitherto bondsmen, how, it is asked, could they have thus become suddenly a well appointed army? Admitting that there was water here and there on the route, yet the general character of the scene of their wanderings was, what it now is, an arid desert. It is called a "great and terrible wilderness," a place of "drought," and "where there was no water," a "desert land," a "waste howling wilderness" (Deut. i. 19; viii. 15; xxxii. 10); "a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt" (Jer. ii. 6). Here they were kept forty years, and had to make lengthened halts, it might be for a year at a time (Num. ix. 22). It was a place so destitute of natural resources that the people had to be fed with daily supplies of manna from heaven, and their garments had to be

preserved to them miraculously without need of renovation. They had numerous flocks and herds with them. How were these supplied with pasturage and water? How also was firewood obtainable for cooking, or for warmth in the winters, which in those regions are severe? The deserts are always in extremes of heat and cold, and I myself can say, from personal knowledge, that ice forms in the neighbourhood of Baghdad. And in this desert place the Israelites had to construct a moveable temple, or tabernacle, of gorgeous materials. It was to consist of embroidered curtains, made of fine linen, coloured blue, purple, and scarlet; over which was to be a covering of dyed rams' skins; and above that one of badgers' skins; and there were to be similar hangings for the veil, the entrance, and the outer court. The whole was to be secured with boards, bars, and posts, overlaid with gold, and adjusted together with silver sockets. The ark, the mercy-seat, with its winged cherubim, the table for the shewbread, with its various utensils, the seven branched candlestick, with its furniture, and the altar for burning incense, were all to be overlaid with gold. The sacrificial altar and its utensils were to be of brass. The priest was to be splendidly attired in fine linen, with decorations of gold and precious stones. Where, and how, it is asked, could such costly and refined materials be obtained and put together by this fugitive people in a waste and howling wilderness?

P.—Certainly those seem to be insurmountable obstacles to the reception of the story.

The course by the Red Sea.

I observe that God is said to have led the Israelites by a round about way in order that they might not come in contact with the Philistines. Was it owing to this measure that they got upon the wrong side of the Red Sea, so as to require that a passage through the sea should be made for them?

S. No. The course they had to hold from Goshen to get to the wilderness, whither God was leading them, was a south-easterly one. Had they kept thereto, they would have cleared the Gulf of Suez, which was the arm of the Red Sea that presented itself to them, but by bearing away a little too much to the westward, they got upon the wrong side of the sea, just a few miles down its western bank.[1] The Philistines lay in

[1] See Map, onwards.

quite a different direction, namely, to the north-east on the shore of the Mediterranean.

P. Then in respect of avoiding the Philistines it was of no importance whether the Israelites went to the west or to the east side of the Red Sea.

S. None.

P. It would seem, then, that they were led to the wrong side of the Red Sea for the mere purpose of having a passage opened to them miraculously through it. What was the first hostile opposition that the Israelites met with?

Conflict with Amalekites.

S. Their first engagement was with the Amalekites.

P. Where did this occur?

S. When they had made a few marches on the other side the Red Sea.

P. But I thought God's design was to keep them at the outset from the risks of war, lest they might be discouraged and turn back to Egypt. How was it then that, foreknowing of course all things, he led them into the way of the Amalekites.

S. That I cannot explain.

P. How did it fare with the Israelites when they did battle with the Amalekites?

S. Moses made Joshua pick out men to engage with them. After this he retired to the top of a hill with "the rod of God" in his hand. All then depended upon his holding up his hand. "It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." Moses at length became tired of standing, so they gave him a stone to sit upon, and Aaron and another held up his hands till the Amalekites were thoroughly beaten.

P.—Might not the same expedient have been adopted with equal success had the Israelites been taken by the direct route, supposing they had there fallen in with the Philistines and been opposed by them.

S.—Apparently so.

P.—Why were the Israelites detained so long as forty years in the wilderness?

Spying out the land.

S.—The land they were to take possession of was Canaan. When they approached it, Moses, by the direction of God, sent twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, to spy it out and see what their prospects were. These returned,

bringing with them a most favourable report of the fertility of the land, but saying that it was full of fortified cities and races of gigantic stature, before whom they appeared as "grasshoppers." Two out of the twelve, namely, Joshua and Caleb, bade them however not to be disheartened, saying they were quite capable of overcoming these tribes. The Israelites were nevertheless discouraged, and wished to go back to Egypt. God then condemned them to wander in the wilderness for forty years, so that all the adults of that generation should leave their "carcases" there, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, who alone were permitted to survive and enter the land.

P.—I can understand a party under a human leader sending forth persons to reconnoitre, but what occasion could there be for a God-led people doing so?

S.—Certainly there could have been no real necessity for the precaution.

P.—And if it were thought proper to depute twelve persons by whose report the people were to be influenced, why should they have been considered transgressors when they were governed by the voices of so large a majority as ten out of the twelve?

S.—That I am unable to explain to you.

P.—If the holding up of Moses' hand with "the rod of God" in it had proved so successful in the case of the fight with the Amalekites, why should not the people have counted upon the same resource in any future engagements they might have?

S.—I cannot tell you.

P.—Was such an expedient ever again employed?

S.—No, never.

P.—Had the sentence of turning them back to wander in the wilderness till they died off no effect in reclaiming the people?

S.—It had. "The people mourned greatly," and putting aside their fears, offered to invade the land.

P.—What happened upon this?

S.—Moses endeavoured to deter them, but some, nevertheless, made the attempt, and got beaten by the Canaanites.

P.—This, then, would serve to show that they were warranted in their first apprehensions.

S.—The difference is this. When God said he would be with them and give them success, they were afraid of results,

and when told that God would not be with them they made the venture.

Forty years in the wilderness.

P.—That certainly was most extraordinary conduct. It appears that at the outset, when the Israelites had to leave Egypt, God was apprehensive that, notwithstanding his purpose of leading them forward, they might turn back to Egypt, if they fell in with the Philistines. What prevented their so turning back, when thus minded on receiving the report of the spies, and in lieu of remaining to rot in the wilderness.

S.—That I cannot tell you.

P.—Perhaps they were afraid of disobeying God.

S.—On the contrary, they proved themselves to be "a stubborn and rebellious generation" (Ps. lxxviii. 8); and during the whole forty years "God was grieved with this generation" (Ps. xcv. 10). Moses' testimony against them at the end of the wanderings, just when they were about to pass into the promised land, was, "From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord" (Deut. ix. 7).

P.—Could it be that they did not dare to move about in such a place without the guidance of the pillar of cloud and of fire, which, of course, would not show them the way back to Egypt?

S.—It cannot be said that they were thus dependent. Notwithstanding the provision said to have been made for them in the pillar of cloud and of fire, they appear to have looked to obtaining the services of ordinary guides. They had, for instance, at one time with them, Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, a man of those parts, namely a Midianite, and when he was about to quit them, Moses said, "Leave us not, I pray thee; for as much as thou knowest how we are to encamp in in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes" (Num. x. 31).

P.—Why that casts discredit altogether upon the existence of the pillar of cloud and fire, does it not? They could not have wanted a human guide if they were aware they had a divine one.

S.—Assuredly not.

P.—Possibly then they did try to force their way back to Egypt and were hindered.

S.—Of that we have no account. In fact, there is scarcely any note of their proceedings between the time of the spies and their entrance into Canaan.

P.—That is, of the forty years of the wilderness journeyings, the history of the last thirty-nine is a blank?

S.—Nearly so.

Object of scheme of occupation of Canaan.

P.—Why were the Canaanites to be ejected?

S.—Because of their wickedness.

P.—They had proved, I suppose, even greater rebels than the Israelites.

S.—That can scarcely be said, seeing that they had never had a knowledge of God or of his commandments.

P.—But perhaps the Israelites became in the end a model people.

S.—No. Their whole history shows them in opposition to God and his ways, guilty of idolatry, bloodshed, and every abomination, until God got rid of them by ejecting them out of the land.

P.—Then the whole of these wonderful manifestations ended in failure?

S.—Certainly so, if judged of up to this time.

P.—Possibly these manifestations acted upon the Egyptians, the great sufferers, and brought them to God.

S.—This might certainly have been expected, for in one of God's messages by Moses to Pharaoh he was told that one aim of the plagues with which he was visited was, "that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth;—that my name may be declared throughout the earth." But the fact is that the Egyptians never were brought to the true faith, and are not in it even now.

Egyptian accounts.

P.—You surprise me. What a waste of active power! What have the Egyptians said of all these wonders wrought in behalf of the Israelites in their land?

S.—Not a word.

P.—Perhaps they were an ignorant race, and kept no records.

S.—On the contrary, they were the most enlightened people that existed in ancient times, and very careful to chronicle what concerned them.

P.—Then, of course, they must have some account of the

Israelites living with them and quitting them, if there is any foundation at all for such a history. What may they have said on the subject?

S.—The Jewish history is that Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob, was sold by his brethren as a slave, and was carried into Egypt; that he there interpreted certain dreams of Pharaoh the king, warning him that there would be seven years of plenty and seven of famine; that Pharaoh consequently made a great man of Joseph, who ruled the land with much wisdom and success during these years, storing up grain in the years of plenty and selling it in the years of famine, and so handled the resources placed at his command, that, finally, all the cattle, and all the land of Egypt, became the king's, upon which Joseph made a law that one-fifth of all the produce raised in the country was to be the king's revenue. It was at this time that the family of the patriarch Jacob, to the number of the seventy males before spoken of, are said to have migrated into Egypt. These certainly were events of great historic importance, namely, the years of plenty, the years of famine, the rule of the foreigner Joseph, the fiscal arrangements he established, and the settlement of the Israelites who afterwards became so vast a host. But of all this there is not a vestige in the Egyptian chronicles; and though here, and at other times, Pharaoh is the designation by which the king of Egypt is described, there is no such name, or designation, in the very copious and ancient records, written and monumental, of the kings of Egypt.

The Hyksos.

As respects the exodus, as it is called, of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, there are some accounts by the Egyptian historian Manetho which bear on the subject. He was high priest in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the Greek rulers of Egypt, and drew his materials from inscriptions and hieroglyphs on columns set up by Thoth, one of the ancient kings. He says that, in the time of King Timaus, men from the East, of an ignoble race, subdued Egypt and ruled over it without incurring hostilities; that this tribe were called Hyksos, or shepherd kings; that they held dominion over Egypt for five hundred and eleven years, oppressing the people, destroying their temples, and reducing them to slavery; that they were at length attacked by the kings of Thebais, defeated, and driven

into a place called Avaris; that there they were besieged, and capitulated, and were allowed to withdraw; and then, with their families, to the number of two hundred and forty thousand in all, and with the whole of their effects, retreated through the desert to Syria, and in that country, since called Judea, built Jerusalem.

Manetho continues to say that, at a subsequent period, the then King Amenophis desired to see the gods. The priest told him that, to have his wish gratified, he must cleanse the country of the lepers abounding in it. The king collected eighty thousand of these unclean people, and sent them to work in quarries to the east of the Nile. The lepers asked to have allotted to them the city Avaris, left vacant by the shepherds, and this was granted. They then revolted, and chose for their ruler a priest of Heliopolis, named Osarsiph. He prohibited the worship of the Egyptian gods, and told his people to slay and sacrifice the animals held sacred by the Egyptians; and he sent to the shepherds at Jerusalem, who had formerly been expelled from Egypt, asking them to come to their aid. This the shepherds did to the number of two hundred thousand men. The King Amenophis retreated into Ethiopia. The new comers oppressed the people, as the former Hyksos had done, and Osarsiph took the name of Moyses. After this, Amenophis returned with a great force, defeated the shepherds and the unclean people, and pursued them to the bounds of Syria, or Judea.[1]

P.—That is certainly a plain piece of history, free from incomprehensible wonders and improbabilities. What are the points of similitude you trace between this account and the Bible narrative of the exodus?

S.—To make the comparison, we must put the two occupations by the Hyksos together as if one story. There will then appear a good many parallel circumstances in their history, when in Egypt, and that of the Israelites. The original Hyksos are said to have come from the East, to have been an ignoble race of shepherds, and to have obtained dominion without force of arms. Just so is it said of the Israelites. They were shepherds from the East, obtained rule through Joseph by the favour of the king, and became so powerful in numbers that it was feared

[1] Cory's Ancient Fragments, 171-173, 176-181.

they would domineer over the Egyptians. The original Hyksos, or shepherds, oppressed the Egyptians and destroyed their temples, and became, of course, hateful to them; and when the Israelites came to settle in the land, Joseph advised them not to make known their calling, but to say that they were dealers in cattle, "for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians" (Gen. xlvi. 34). The Hyksos were in the land several centuries, and so also is it said of the Israelites. The unclean people, who became associated with the later Hyksos, were put by themselves to the eastward of the Nile, and subjected to forced labour on the quarries as bondsmen; and the Israelites were located apart in Goshen, which was to the east of the Nile, and there held in bondage, and made to work at brick-making. Avaris, where the Hyksos took post, is identified by the Jewish historian, Josephus, with Goshen.[1] The leader of the unclean people was a priest of Heliopolis, and bore the Egyptian name of Osarsiph, which he changed for Moyses. Joseph bore an Egyptian name, Pharaoh having called him Zaphnath-paaneah, and he married the daughter of the priest of On (Gen. xli. 45), which place was afterwards called Heliopolis.[2] The name Moyses, stated to have been assumed by the aforesaid leader, identifies him absolutely with the leader of the Israelites. All the learning of the country centred in the priests. Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's house, and "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22), and was himself taken to be an Egyptian (Ex. ii. 19). The leader of the unclean people, though educated in Egyptian tenets, became a religious reformer, putting down the worship of the Egyptian gods, and using in the sacrifices he enjoined animals sacred to the Egyptians. And so Moses. He set himself against the Egyptian idolatries, and inculcated the sacrifice of the bull and the ram, which were considered holy animals by the Egyptians. The early Hyksos were allowed to withdraw peaceably from Egypt, and retreated with their families and all their effects through the desert to Judea where they founded Jerusalem. The unclean people, who associated themselves with the later Hyksos, were led by Moyses in the same direction. The parallel here is very plain.

P.—What is the age attributed to the expulsion of the

[1] Higgins' Anacalypsis I. 56, note. [2] Inman's "Ancient Faiths," I. 64.

early Hyksos, and how does this agree with the time ascribed to the exodus of the Israelites?

S.—The expulsion of the early Hyksos is thought to have been about B.C. 1450,[1] and the year of the exodus, according to our version of the Bible, was B.C. 1490. Prichard considers the times to correspond within a year.[2]

P.—Is Manetho a reliable author, and how have his writings been preserved?

S.—His account of the Hyksos has been incorporated by Josephus in his controversy with Appion. We have also an extensive table of Egyptian dynasties derived from him, on which all students of Egyptian history more or less rely. "The recent discoveries of M. Mariette, perhaps the ablest and most successful of all explorers in the valley of the Nile, have conferred upon ethnology two inestimable boons. First, he has opened up a world of monuments relating to a part of Egyptian history, about which we knew nothing, and, the most interesting of all, the earliest. And secondly, he has dispelled the last shades of doubt which hung about the authenticity of Manetho's lists of kings."[3]

P.—What does Josephus say as to the connection between the Hyksos and the Israelites when in Egypt?

S.—Josephus identifies the early Hyksos with the Israelites, but throws a doubt on the accuracy of the second narrative regarding the unclean people.[4] "Josephus and Plutarch think that the Phenician shepherds, said to be driven out of Egypt, were the Israelites."[5]

Silence of Egyptian records.

P.—And in the well kept records of the Egyptian nation there is no better support than the above for the wondrous history of the Israelites in Egypt recounted in the Bible!

S.—I will give you some passages from authors who have made a study of the subject, which will show you the character of the Egyptian records, and their silence on this head. "It is for the three great Theban dynasties—from B.C. 1748 to B.C. 978, that the architectural remains, especially at Thebes,

[1] Historic Notes, by Samuel Sharpe, 89.
[2] Egyptian Chronology, 81.
[3] Man's Origin and Destiny, by J. P. Lesley, 145.
[4] Prichard's Egyptian Chronology, 68-70.
[5] Higgins' Anacalypsis, I. 392.

are so abundant, and the links of mutual connection so numerous, as to afford something like a continuous monumental history, while the temples, palaces, and tombs of many of the kings of these dynasties are on so vast a scale, and their wars and conquests, and tributes recorded are so considerable, as to strike every beholder with amazement. The Egyptian chronicles take us back with specific details, and even with contemporary monuments and inscriptions, above 2000 years before Christ; and with lists of names manifestly historical, and some well marked facts 200 years higher."[1] "There is no nation whose people have been more careful in recording the daily and yearly events which happened amongst them than the Egyptians, yet neither in writing nor in sculpture is there any representation of the seven years of plenty, when the cities were stored to overflowing with the effects of the bounteous harvest, nor yet of the years of great famine, when the people sold all they had, and themselves too, for bread to keep them alive.—Having thus premised that the Egyptians did not shrink from recording their own misfortunes, we turn to their remains, and find no single evidence of the presence of such a ruler as Joseph—of such a nation of slaves as the Hebrews—of a king known as Pharaoh—of such calamities as the various plagues, nor of such an overthrow as the destruction of an army in the Red Sea. Even Ewald, with all his learning, is unable to bring one single valid witness to the truthfulness, or even the probability of the Mosaic story."[2] "How very extraordinary a thing it is, that the destruction of the hosts of Pharaoh should not have been known to Berosus, Strabo, Diodorus, or Herodotus; that they should not have heard of these stupendous events, either from the Egyptians, or from the Syrians, Arabians, or Jews."[3]

P.—What was the era of the earliest of the writers you have named above?

S.—The earliest was Herodotus, who is so looked up to as to be called the father of history. He flourished B.C. 450.[4]

P.—When did Manetho write, and what pretensions in literature had Thoth, from whom he derived his materials?

[1] Egyptian Chronicles, by W. Palmer, I., xviii. lii.
[2] Inman's Ancient Faiths, II. 95, 96, 346.
[3] Higgins' Anacalypsis, I. 633.
[4] Palmer's Egyptian Chronicles, I. xlix.

S.—Manetho wrote about B.C. 276.[1] Thoth, according to the tables of Manetho, (as also those of Eratosthenes,) was the son of Menes the first of the historic kings of Egypt.[2] He was deified after death, and called Hermes or Mercury. "To this Hermes all the science and learning of the Egyptians were attributed. He taught them the art of writing, gave them laws, and instructed them in astronomy, geometry, medicine, and other sciences."[3] Sanchoniatho, a still earlier historian, resorted to the same records for his materials, finding them laid up in a town called Berytus.[4]

P.—How near to the time of Manetho was Ezra's promulgation of the Book of the Law?

S.—That is said to have occurred B.C. 445, or about 170 years before Manetho.

P.—The marvels recounted in the Bible narrative of the Exodus could not have failed to attract the historians of these parts had they really occurred, and Josephus, being a Jew, would assuredly have supported this narrative with something better than Manetho's account of the Hyksos, or eastern shepherds, had there been anything else discoverable in the Egyptian Chronicles. I cannot but presume that the Bible narrative has been based on the same materials used by Sanchoniatho and Manetho, and that the writer has superadded his astounding marvels, and put the whole into the shape he has adopted, in order to magnify his own people and show them to have been special objects of God's favour and protection.

Miscellaneous miracles.

Let us pass now to other matters. Were there any results of importance from what was done in regard to Gideon's fleece, the drought caused by Elijah, the curing of Naaman, the preservation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and the multiplying supplies from the widow's handful of meal and cruse of water, and the other widow's pot of oil?

S.—None that I can particularize. Gideon had received a visit from "the angel of the Lord," and had been assured that he was to deliver his countrymen from the oppression of

[1] Palmer's Egyptian Chronicles, I. 86.
[2] Cory's Ancient Fragments, 94.
[3] Prichard's Egyptian Mythology, 126, 127.
[4] Sanchoniatho, by Bishop Cumberland, 42.

the Midianites, and when he offered up a sacrifice, fire, at the touch of the angel, came out of a rock and consumed it. The Midianites and the Amalekites came out in force. Then "the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon," and he blew his trumpet and assembled his people. At this time he sought signs from God for his assurance that Israel were to be saved by him, and he proposed that a fleece he had by him should at one time be made wet with dew, and at another preserved dry. This seems to have been altogether a private testimony to Gideon. The drought by Elijah was of course nationally felt. It ended in a trial between Elijah and the priests of Baal to demonstrate with whom was the true God; and this terminating in Elijah's favour, he effected the slaughter of the priests of Baal, who numbered four hundred and fifty. This, however, brought about nothing, for the next event recorded is that Elijah had to flee for his life from the king's wife, Jezebel, who favoured the worship of Baal. The preservation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, led to a proclamation by the king of Babylon that all were to worship the God who had delivered them; but, as after a similar order issued on the occasion of Daniel's preservation in the lion's den, nothing came thereof, the people continuing as before idolaters. The other miracles you ask about, namely, the curing of Naaman, and the replenishing the stores of the two widows, were of an individual character, productive of no apparent consequences.

P.—I must remark, as to the operations with Gideon's fleece, that they are of a sort unworthy to call down divine agency for their performance, and that it is inexplicable how such questionable and insignificant phenomena should have impressed Gideon with the reliability of the message communicated to him, when the more important manifestations connected with the angel had failed to satisfy him on the head. Gideon, it appears to me, should rather have been rebuked for his distrust in God than gratified with the experiments demanded by him.

Celestial fire consuming sacrifices.

I notice a good many instances of the acceptance of sacrifices demonstrated by fire sent from heaven which consumed the offerings. It was so in the case of Aaron, of Gideon, of Manoah, of Elijah, of David, and of Solomon, and supernatural fire was exhibited also at a sacrifice of Abraham's. As this

happened so frequently, did the converse hold that a sacrifice was not accepted when no such demonstration was made?

S.—That does not appear so.

P.—Then if there was a stated priesthood, how did it happen that the sacrifices of those who were not of the priestly order were marked with divine acceptance? In other instances the divine judgment is said to have been poured out upon transgressors of this sort. The fire from heaven should have come down on the persons of Gideon, Manoah, Elijah, David, and Solomon, in lieu of upon their offerings. It would seem either that there could have been no special ordination of priests in those days, or that the visible acceptance of these sacrifices must be a fiction.

S.—Certainly there would seem to be no other alternative.

Judgments by celestial fire.

P.—On various occasions fire was sent down to destroy people, making the exhibition therefore a channel of wrath as well as of favour. Fire burnt up Sodom and the cities adjacent. Nadab and Abihu were so destroyed; so also a number of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the two hundred and fifty associated with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the two companies of fifty who came in succession after Elijah. Did these marked judgments produce any results on the survivors?

S.—None are recorded.

Walls of Jericho.

P.—The walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of trumpets. Was this expedient used again by the Israelites at other sieges?

S.—It was not.

Arresting course of sun and moon.

P.—Perhaps the greatest wonders recounted are when the course of the heavenly orbs is disturbed. This is said to have happened twice, and upon occasions that appear to me quite unworthy to draw forth such magnificent demonstrations. The first was in the time of Joshua, when the Israelites were engaged with the Amorites. The enemy had been defeated in the usual way by force of arms, and were flying. Showers of stones then came down from heaven, and put an end to even more than had been disposed of by the swords of the Israelites. One would think that would have sufficed without requiring that the sun and the moon should stand still merely that the slaughter by the sword might be prolonged. Perhaps, however, the Amorites were to be exterminated for some particular

end. The other occasion is a still less important one. A sick king, in progress of recovery, wishes to know whether he shall be well enough to attend public worship in the course of three days, and is allowed to ask for a sign whether the sun should go forwards or backwards, and by which he is to know if his desire is to be fulfilled; and to gratify him, the whole course of nature is disturbed, and the sun put back. Who is to believe such an absurd story as that?

S.—It is in the Bible, and therefore is to be believed without question. As to the Amorites, I am able to answer you. They were among the people, respecting whom God gave the Israelites the command, "Thou shalt utterly destroy them" (Deut. xx. 17). Joshua, perhaps, thought the time for so doing had come, and thus got the sun and the moon to stand still, in order that he might accomplish the task. But, nevertheless, it was not fulfilled, for more than three hundred years afterwards we find, in the time of Samuel, the last and the greatest of the judge-rulers of Israel, that "there was peace between Israel and the Amorites" (1 Sam. vii. 14).

P.—That is certainly very surprising. What is to be said of the value of God's commands, if they cannot be fulfilled even when such extraordinary means were taken for the purpose? I should prefer believing that no such commands had been given, and no such means taken.

Urim and Thummim, &c.

There appear to have been certain material objects through which communication might be held with God, and his directions received. These were the Urim and Thummim, whatever these may have been, the mercy-seat on the ark, the altar, and the ephod. What instances are there of such communication being held, and with what ensuing benefits? The ark, you have told me, has disappeared, and in Ezra's time they were hoping to repossess themselves of a Urim and Thummim. The brazen altar and the ephod, I presume, are equally not existing.

S.—There are no particular instances recorded of the use of the Urim and Thummim, and the mercy seat, or the altar, as channels of intercourse with God. Of the use of the ephod in that way we hear but once, namely, when David wished to know whether he was likely to overtake some flying Amalekites. The material objects themselves have been all lost long ago, no one knows how.

P.—I cannot think that there were such appointed channels of communication with God when no benefit therefrom was obtained, or even sought for, so far as the accounts go; and it is incredible that the implements themselves, considering their alleged importance, should one and all have disappeared without a record to show what had become of them. All this is in keeping with the Book of the Law not being forthcoming for so many centuries, and the only conclusion I can come to is that the absence of these things is to be accounted for in no other way than by supposing they had no existence. Why also should there have been four such channels of communication when one would have sufficed? And when we turn to the next section of marvels you have noted down, we hear of the communication with God held by prophets and others, including women, and even by those who were transgressors or without knowledge of God, such as Adam, Eve, Cain, Sarah, Ahab, and the king of Syria, without recourse to any such material instruments, proving no such instruments to have been needed.

Inquiring of God.

Some of these verbal inquiries of God appear to have been resorted to on very insufficient occasions, as when David asks how he was to get at the Philistines who had rallied after a defeat, and was told to do so by making a circuit round by some mulberry trees; and when he wishes to know, after Saul's death, whether he was to show himself in any of the cities of Judah, and then in which of them; and when Saul was missed and had "hid among the stuff." Surely the "inquiring of God" must be a phrase having a meaning very far short of the import of the words themselves when it is used in relation to such unimportant matters.

Micaiah.

The contest between four hundred prophets on one side, and Micaiah on the other, in the case of Ahab, has a good deal of unreality about it in my eyes. Why should so many as four hundred be consulted when one true medium was all that was wanted? Was God addressed by all these in a mob? And if they all agreed as to the answer received from God, what could be gained farther by going on to still another medium, namely Micaiah? Then I must be permitted to withhold my belief to Micaiah having actually seen God seated on his throne with all the host of heaven around him, and consulting with them how

he was to impose on Ahab, and then accepting the services of a lying spirit who volunteered to go forth for the purpose. That is obviously a scene painted up by one who had very unworthy conceptions of the Divinity and his ways. Micaiah proved the true prophet as respected the end of the expedition and the fate of Ahab; but when a story is put forward with such obvious embellishments, it may also be suspected that the prediction was made true by being written after the event.

Sacrifice of Saul's grandchildren.

As to the famine in David's time, said to have been removed by hanging up seven of Saul's descendants, I am quite unable to believe that God countenanced that act. When, and under what circumstances, did Saul slay the Gibeonites? How can two such very dissimilar events as the slaughter and the famine be connected together? Why was not Saul visited for his own act? Why should seven suffer for one? And what satisfaction could God have in the cruel and ignominious death of Saul's innocent grandchildren?

S.—I cannot gainsay your remarks; and as to the hanging of Saul's grandsons, I have no explanation to offer. Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites is not recorded. David might have looked nearer home for a cause for the famine, supposing it to have been a special visitation for transgression. Since the time of Saul he had been guilty of his great crime in the matter of the wife of Uriah, and he had treated the unhappy Ammonites with far more cruelty than Saul could have displayed towards the Gibeonites. Having besieged and taken their city Rabbah, "he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon" (2 Sam. xii. 31). Moreover his act of giving up Saul's descendants for sacrifice was a very treacherous one, being in violation of a solemn oath he had made to Saul that he would not "cut off his seed after him" (1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22).

P.—What a monster!

Fruits to Israel of their access to God.

What was the general condition of the Israelites after they were established in the land conferred upon them? Was it one of peace and prosperity, with the recognition of God in all their ways, as might be expected of a people who were so remarkably the favourites of God, and who had him to resort to, direct their forces, and guide them on all occasions?

S.—Unfortunately there was nothing of this sort. They were commonly steeped in idolatry; surrounded by enemies with whom they were continually at war, and with very varying success; torn by internal dissensions, ten out of the twelve tribes revolting from their king and setting up a rival and hostile state, and even rival worship; and often held down under the dominion of oppressors, such as in early times the Mesopotamians, the Moabites, Philistines, Canaanites, Midianites, and Ammonites; in later days, the Syrians, Babylonians, and Assyrians; and in later still, the Greeks and Romans; some of whom carried them off bodily into captivity, or drove them out of the land. At present they are under the yoke of the Turks.

P.—This all appears to me most incomprehensible, and not to be reconciled with the idea that God was specially associated with this people, and actively engaged for them. Their direct intercourse with him for counsel and guidance cannot have obtained when such were the dire results.

Dreams.

Now, as to dreams, I have been much surprised to see it laid down so broadly that when a man is in "deep sleep," "slumbering upon his bed," this is a time when God "openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." I cannot conceive a more unreliable medium than the vagaries of the thoughts at a time when reason is in abeyance; thoughts we know that are influenced by a man's occupations during the day, or the state of his health.

S.—You are certainly supported, not by common experience merely, but by another part of the scripture, where it is said, "a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.—In the multitude of dreams and many words, there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God." (Ec. v. 3, 7).

P.—If I am allowed to choose between conflicting passages in the Bible, I much prefer abiding by the one you have last quoted. Some of the dreams seem to me of an unworthy sort to associate God therewith. For example, that connected with Abimelech and Sarah; Jacob's dream respecting the procreation of cattle and the fraud he thereby perpetrated on Laban; and Joseph's dream of his parents and brethren bowing down to him. If the latter was prophetic, I should like to know whether the dream was fulfilled.

S.—Joseph became a great man in Egypt and exhibited himself as such to his brethren. So far the dream may be said to have come true. That his father humbled himself before him was not the case; and his mother could not have done so, as she died even before the occurrence of the dream.

P.—Among the dreams of the New Testament there are some connected with Herod with which it seems to me singularly inappropriate to associate God. There was a dream to warn the wise men not to put themselves again in the way of Herod; another to tell Joseph to flee with his family from Herod to Egypt, and to remain there "until God should bring him word;" a third to tell him that Herod was dead and that he might return home; and a fourth, on his coming there and finding Herod's son enthroned in his place, to intimate that he had better turn off to Galilee. Was he safe as to this last destination?

S.—He was not. Herod's jurisdiction embraced Galilee also, and his kingdom having been divided amongst his sons after his death, there was a son of his ruling in Galilee just as there was the one ruling in Judea. Moreover, he would have to pass through the whole length of the dominions of the latter to get into Galilee, unless he went by a long round about way through the deserts on the other side of Jordan, which is not to be gathered from the statement made.[1]

P.—These conflicting and misguiding dreams cannot then possibly have been revelations from God. Then there is that very improbable story of Pilate's wife troubling him when on the judgment-seat about a dream she had had respecting the prisoner under trial before him, and advising him to acquit the prisoner on the strength of it. Such a circumstance as that could not really have happened.

Visions.

I turn now to visions. These can scarcely be discriminated from dreams. Some of those in the New Testament relate to matters of so ordinary a nature that it is hard to believe that God can have stepped out of his usual course to communicate directly with these dreamers on affairs of this sort; as when Cornelius has to send for Peter; when Ananias is sent to Paul; and when Paul has to go to Macedonia, or to prolong his stay in Corinth. The miraculous belongs properly to grand occa-

[1] Evanson's Dissonance of the Four Evangelists, 128, 129.

sions, not to current incidents of the day; and when this element is introduced at every turn, we may, I think, attribute the interventions to the fancies of the narrators, rather than look on them as based upon actual occurrence.

Then there are visions of another character, such as those recounted by Ezekiel, Daniel, and in the Apocalypse. These to my mind have no other foundation than a highly excited imagination. They consist of descriptions of fiery objects, sparkling thrones, creatures of monstrous shapes, huge wheels covered with eyes and imbued with living spirit, &c. The symbols and comparisons are all drawn from earth, and therefore not likely to be true of things in another and unrevealed sphere, and the writers appear to have derived their ideas the one from the other. That this is the case as respects the representations of the Apocalypse, you have already shown in tracing its close resemblance to the book of Enoch. Enoch not being an inspired work, the writer, of course, could have had no such visions as he describes, and he drew his imagery doubtless from Ezekiel and Daniel. The authenticity of Daniel is disputed, you say, and it becomes the easier to suppose that the source of his descriptions is the earlier book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel appears extravagant to a high degree, as for instance when he says a spirit of a fiery amber colour lifted him up from earth by a lock of his hair, and transported him to various places on earth to witness what was going on there. This sort of representation, as it appears to me, detracts from the reputation of the Bible as coming to us from God, rather than supports its pretensions to be a divine work.

Ministrations of angels.

I come now to the apparitions of angels. They are represented as God's messengers and ministers, dispensing his favours, or inflicting his chastisements, as it may be. They appear to have special offices, and to bear names as human beings do. One called Michael had charge of the interests of the Jewish nation; another, called Gabriel, was used in the new dispensation. Then one was attached to Persia, and another to Greece, and these seem to have been engaged in struggles with Michael, just as the different nationalities they represented may have been engaged on earth. This seems to me particularly fanciful. Children are said each to have their angels, and it is inconceivable, if this is so, that adults are not equally attended.

But what is this but to substitute the providence of angels for the providence of God? In the case of the Israelites, as led out of Egypt, this is distinctly shown to have been so. God is even made to say that they were a race so stiff-necked that he could not trust himself with them. He might become so incensed with them, that in a heated moment, against his better judgment, and in oblivion of his promises in their favour, he might suddenly put an end to them. He thought it better, therefore, to put them under the calmer temperament of an angel. I am unable to accept such a disparaging view of God. I believe him to be with me, as with all his creation, and not to have cast off his responsibilities upon others. Then I see that the ethereal spirit, when disengaged by death from its corporeal tenement, is supposed not to be able to pass to its heavenly or spiritual sphere without being carried up there bodily by angels, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Angels are said also so to roam about this earth, partaking of the wants of human beings, that in entertaining those we receive as human guests, we may really be entertaining angels. An instance is given in the next section of apparitions of God when Abraham entertains three heavenly visitants with cakes, butter, milk, and veal. Everywhere I observe earthly attributes made to characterise objects of the higher or spiritual sphere. This is carried to a degree so debasing as to represent these heavenly beings as capable of inspiring sexual passions of the most odious description in the human race, and as possessing such feelings themselves towards women of earth, even to the actual indulgence thereof, and with prolific results. I am quite unable to accept as really true tales of this sort.

Satan.

The personality of a malignant spirit such as Satan, supported by subordinates of his own stamp, seems to me to be the offspring of the same imaginative minds which have peopled the earth with angelic beings. One sort are good, the other bad, and in each instance the mould they are cast in is an earthly one. The evil angels are confined in chains in darkness. Satan is bound and cast for a specific term into a pit, or dungeon, as a human criminal might be, and is afterwards, with his attendants, tormented continually, "day and night," with "fire and brimstone," just as if they possessed

physical frames like ourselves. I must confess these ideas appear to me most childish. Then as God commits the reins of administration so frequently, and so largely, to the good angels, he appears, even much more absolutely, to have abandoned them to this great adversary Satan. Is this probable? Would the Creator of the universe abdicate his power in favour of a being bent on undermining his authority and destroying his works? And is there any consistency in deputing beneficent beings to watch over us for good, and evil ones to work us harm, leaving the two, when they meet, to fight it out as they can. Thus the angelic princes of Persia and of Greece stand opposed to the Jewish angelic prince Michael, and Zechariah sees the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. All this speaks to me of human invention which has no better form to give to spiritual influences than an earthly type. Nor can I at all accept the idea that God has given up the governance of this earth to an evil being. Everywhere I see proofs of his goodness and unceasing care, under the operations of laws framed for our benefit, which are as true and as undisturbable as himself. The hazardous conflicts between antagonistic powers of another world I certainly have had no experience of, nor can I conceive that they enter into God's system of ordering things on earth.

Apparitions of God.

These writers go to the very extreme of boldness when they venture to describe physical appearances of the divine being himself. In so doing, however, they cannot get beyond forms and constitutions of earth. Jacob meets with him in human shape, and wrestles with him, and proves nearly a match for him; Moses habitually sees him face to face, but on one occasion nothing but his "back parts" are exhibited to him; while at another he and a large party with him see him openly in his glory; and thus he is described in Job, and displayed to Micaiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the author of the Apocalypse, enthroned like any earthly potentate in material splendour. Jesus is declared to be now at his right hand, where Stephen saw him, seated with God on his throne, until he may obtain the separate throne appointed for himself. But while these large demands are made upon our credulity, there are corrective declarations in this very record itself by which I

certainly prefer to abide. God, in spite of all these startling descriptions, is recognised to be "invisible," one "whom no man hath seen, nor can see." What becomes of the assertions that he has been repeatedly seen in such and such an aspect? and what is the measure of dependence to be placed on the word of those who declare he has been thus seen?

I turn now to the wonders wrought by Jesus and his followers, and I confess my experiences of the Hindu tenets ill prepare me to accept miraculous exhibitions as satisfactory demonstrations of a divine being appearing in human form. I am quite unable to understand of Jesus how he can have been the "express image" of that which is absolutely "invisible." However, I will examine some of his works. He turned water into wine. What was the occasion for that?

Water changed into wine.

S.—Merely to promote conviviality at a wedding feast. When the people had "well drunk," and exhausted the supply, he, in this way, provided them with more, to the extent, it has been calculated, of 135 gallons.[1]

Feeding multitudes.

P.—This does not appear to me very god-like. Then I see that, as Elisha had done on a smaller scale, he fed multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, who, after being satisfied, left, apparently, in fragments, more than they had begun with. That must have impressed his followers with a sense of his vast resources.

S.—One would have thought so. The demonstration seems, however, to have been without effect. After the first of the miraculous supplies, on a second similar occasion, when Jesus proposed to feed the fasting multitude, the disciples querulously asked, "From whence can a man satisfy these men here in the wilderness?" quite unmindful of the ability to do so he had already exhibited. And finally, on mistaking his allusion to the leaven, or false doctrine, of the Pharisees, for a reproach for their forgetting to bring bread with them, Jesus had to charge them with an utter oblivion of these successive miraculous feedings. "Do ye not understand," he said, "neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, neither the seven loaves of the four thousand" (Matt. xvi. 5-12).

P.—When I see results so inconsistent with the display of

[1] Hennell's Inquiry into Origin of Christianity, 198.

such miraculous power, I cannot believe these narratives to be founded upon actual fact. The discrepancies look to me like the errors of a writer drawing upon his imagination.

Star guiding wise men.

I cannot understand about the star guiding the wise men to the spot where Jesus was born. People would be considered foolish now-a-days who set out on a long journey following the movements of a wandering star, if there is such a thing. Besides, why should the star have taken them to Jerusalem, where Jesus was not, and there have left them to make ordinary inquiry as to where it was he was to be met with? and when through such means they had learned that they were to look for him in Bethlehem, what need was there for the star to re-appear for their guidance? And how is it possible for an object so remote as a star, which would be visible in the same spot to observers hundreds of miles away from one another, to have actually pointed to the very house where Jesus lay? The story appears to me too full of inconsistencies to be otherwise than unreal.

Temptation of Jesus.

The account of the temptation of Jesus involves of course the existence of Satan and his bodily presence on earth. I thought Jesus was God! How could he be driven, without his own volition, into the wilderness, there to be with the wild beasts fasting for forty days, and after this subjected to the temptations of the devil? Was he really tempted?

S.—Apparently he was habitually liable to temptation, just as ourselves. He "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. iv. 15.)

P.—That I can well understand, viewing him as a man. But what became of his Godhead? That should have placed him beyond the sense of any temptation. To be tempted, I understand to mean to be brought to a point when it becomes a question to yield to something seductive, or not to yield. I could not tempt a rich man with a penny, or a man satisfied after a sumptuous feast with a piece of dry bread. Then with what could God, the creator and possessor of all things, be really tempted? The instances you have given me of the devil's attempt upon Jesus seem to me ludicrous, if to be viewed as exposing him to any actual temptation. He was to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple to see how God's angels would hold him up; whereas, if himself God, he would need

no other support than his own power. He had walked on water, and could of course float on air. Then of what value to him were "all the kingdoms of the world," supposing it possible that from the top of any mountain he could have been shown them, all round the globe, "in a moment of time," as stated? As a devotee, in his mere human capacity, earthly glory would present no attraction to him, and, as God, it is a mere mockery to suppose that he could have the offer of such an evanescent object seriously made to him. And the return expected was no less than that he should overthrow the whole course of his own constitution, and rule, and worship the arch-enemy, he, as God, knowing him well to be such! Then there are the same passages of a human body, spirit-borne, through the air, first to a pinnacle of the temple, and then to the top of "an exceeding high mountain," as occurred to Ezekiel in vision. Are we to take such a statement as this as founded on actual fact? The writer appears to me throughout to have been drawing upon his imagination, and to have presented us after all with an unreal, or only mock temptation.

Cursing the fig tree.

Can you tell me what lesson was inculcated by the cursing of the fig tree? I cannot understand how any man could expect to find figs fit to satisfy his hunger on at the wrong season for the fruit; much less how a man, who was God, could fall into such a mistake; and the act of cursing an unconscious plant, whether it was the time for figs or not, seems to me so petty, and so silly, as to be ascribable only to a lunatic.

S.—The cursing the fig tree appears to have been merely an occasion taken by Jesus to display his power. When his disciples were surprised at the operation, he observed to them, "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

P.—I wonder at the disciples being struck with surprise at so insignificant an act of power as scorching up a plant, an event of daily occurrence arising from natural causes, when they had seen their master overthrow all the laws of nature in turning water into wine, feeding multitudes upon nothing, walking on the water, and raising the dead, besides curing

blindness, dumbness, and every manner of infirmity with a word. I say to myself, can he have done these wonderful things, and yet have created no faith in his power in the spectators? or have we another instance of the inconsistencies into which a writer is apt to fall when framing a fictitious narrative? To pass, however, from withering a plant, to moving a huge mountain with a thought, is certainly a great stride. Did Jesus, or any believer in him, at any time do such a thing?

S.—I cannot say I have heard even of a pebble being moved by the power of faith.

Speaking in foreign tongues.

P.—There was the knowledge of foreign languages, to any extent, conferred miraculously on the disciples at the feast of Pentecost. Has that power been kept up? I presume the knowledge, as then imparted, was very perfect of its kind.

S.—No; the power has not been perpetuated. Christians have to acquire languages by study, just as others do; and the Greek of the New Testament is a "barbarous idiom." "The apostles," observes Jerome, "own themselves rude in speech," referring to what Paul has said of his own diction in 2 Cor. xi. 6. Origen makes a similar observation. And Erasmus notices "that the language of the apostles is not only rough and unpolished, but imperfect; also confused, and sometimes even plainly solecising and absurd."[1]

P.—I understand you to say that the gift of tongues came in fulfilment of the promise of Jesus to send the Holy Ghost. Has the Holy Ghost then been withdrawn?

S.—No. He is considered ever to be with believers, though there is now no such sensible proof of his presence.

P.—That is, we are to believe in a thing without the evidence attaching to the existence of the thing! I must say I see declaration, without reality, everywhere in these statements.

Curing sicknesses.

We pass to a new class of action, that of removing infirmities and sicknesses. Under the old dispensation, I observe but one such instance, namely the curing Naaman of his leprosy. How is it that in the new this sort of manifestation was of daily occurrence? Why should maladies be left to take their course under one rule, and be removed miraculously, whenever met with, under the other?

[1] "Hennell's Inquiry into Origin of Christianity," 237, 238.

S.—There is a passage in Isaiah which probably led to the idea that the power of miraculous healing was to be exercised by the Messiah, and thus occasioned the ascription of such power to Jesus. It is said, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (xxxv. 5, 6). The time is that of the restoration of Israel, and the language apparently figurative, the blind who were to be made to see, and the deaf who were to be made to hear, being such spiritually.

P.—Then we have, probably, in these miracles of healing, merely a fresh instance of the inventive faculties of the writers. And what was to be the end of these miraculous cures? Were the persons delivered never to fall again under the power of illness, or to die? The course of the world, wherein infirmities and decay are the lot of man, and inherent to the composition of his frame in the circumstances surrounding him, to my mind contradicts the whole action as proceeding from divine interposition.

Use of spittle, &c.

I see saliva used on several occasions as a remedial agent. What is the meaning of this?

S.—"In the case of magical cures, according to the superstition of the times, saliva was an important ingredient." There is an instance given by Tacitus of the Emperor Vespation employing his saliva to restore sight to a blind man.[1]

P.—It is hard to associate such a device with a divine being, especially when accompanied with the parade of putting the fingers into the ears, touching the tongue, looking up to heaven, and sighing. Perhaps the writers thought they were giving reality to their story by introducing such details.

Deaf and dumb spirit.

Then there is what is called a deaf and dumb spirit of a formidable kind, tearing the victim whose body he inhabited, and making him gnash his teeth, foam, and wallow on the ground, whom the disciples had tried to cast out but could not. Jesus however ejects him, and then explains, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." This looks to me like mere pretentiousness. What could have acted on the other occasions but the power of God,—a power of course invoked? and how came it that there was one sort of

[1] Strauss' New Life of Jesus, I. 369; II. 155.

evil spirit not amenable to such power, in the simplicity of its fulness, but requiring that the operator should be aided, furthermore, with his own exercises of praying and fasting?

Devils in swine.

There is a still more formidable possession, that of the maniacs who haunted the tombs, the devils in whom were sufficiently numerous to occupy the bodies of two thousand swine, into which they were ejected. I am at a loss to understand how, as a physical fact, such a phenomenon could possibly have occurred, or what satisfaction it could be to the devils to enter into the swine, especially as the latter were so soon to destroy themselves.

S.—I am sorry I am unable to assist you in comprehending this story. All I can say is that it is so told, except that Mark and Luke deepen the difficulty by saying that this multitude of evil spirits were all in one man, not in two as stated by Matthew.

P.—Perhaps the whole is put forward as a mere wonderment, and is due to no other source than the imagination of the writer. The discrepancy as to whether there was one maniac, or two, is in itself enough to lead to the reality of the story being called in question.

Raising the dead.

In the power of raising the dead, I observe, Jesus did not stand alone, otherwise I should have taken this attribute of creating, or re-creating life, as a peculiar demonstration of his divinity. Elijah and Elisha exercised it, as did Peter and Paul; and even Elisha's dry bones had this power inherent in them. And I observe that in the mission conferred on the twelve apostles this office of raising the dead was comprehended. Twelve men sent abroad to go about restoring the dead to life must have caused intense commotion everywhere. The reign of death would, in fact, be abolished. What was the result of this amazing procedure?

S.—None that I can tell you of. No results are recorded.

P.—Then I must conclude the whole to have been unreal, and that the twelve did not go out on such an errand. The writer has again exhibited extravagant power out of the copiousness of his imagination. And after all, would it be an act of beneficence to comfort the survivors thus at the expense of the departed? The dead have gone through the painful struggle of grappling with death. The soul has passed away

to a higher and happier state. Why call it back again to re-occupy the cast off, and probably infirm body, in order to undergo the same painful process of disruption again? And can it be any comfort to the relatives that the poor creature has to die twice? This is not an effort of power that I can ascribe to God. He would not trifle with his creatures thus, calling away their souls and then sending them back again. This sort of resurrection seems to me just what the human mind might conceive when looking about for demonstrations of divine power manifested in the miraculous.

The appeal to miracles.

Did Jesus rely on these exhibitions as evidence of his divine mission?

S.—He did so. When John sent to know whether he was the expected personage, meaning the Messiah, he appealed to the miracles he was working in evidence of who he was. He sent a similar message to Herod. "Go ye," he said, "and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow." When the Jews asked him to tell them plainly if he were the Christ, he replied, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." And this appeal he repeatedly made. "I have greater witness than John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness that the Father hath sent me." "Many good works have I showed you from my Father.—If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake." "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

P.—I see that everything depends on the acceptance of this testimony of the miracles. If they prevail, then the mission of Jesus, as of God, is established. If otherwise, then he was not of God. This appears to me a very riskful issue to put so great a question upon. The miracles are presented to us as "the works of God," but in point of fact they contradict all we know of as the indubitable works of the Creator. These latter are works in nature, regulated by a system of refined,

organized, and unchangeable laws, the whole adjusted and operating together in well-ordered correspondence and sympathy. But the miracles are works out of nature, dependent on no restraint of law, and springing only from arbitrary individual will. So that God having given us a testimony to himself in works in nature, established and maintained from the foundation of the world to the present time, and spread abroad in the sight of all over the face of the whole universe, we are called upon to accept, equally as testimony of him, facts of an exactly converse and opposite order, namely works out of nature, said to have been presented at a very short season, in a circumscribed locality, ages ago, to some select and favoured persons, and which are no longer to be seen or heard of anywhere. The facts in nature are of a character that none can mistake. A child may see that they point to the finger of God, and to that only. The facts out of nature, on the other hand, are nowhere visible, and are of a sort that deceivers appeal to liberally in support of the falsest systems, and therefore, as such, they are most questionable sources of reliance. One man may say that A with his budget of such facts is a true emissary from God ; another that B, with his, is so. And to us, at this distance of time, it is not the facts themselves that are presented to us for acceptance, but merely the statements of certain persons that there were such facts. My faith in Jesus does not depend on his exhibition to me of what he calls his Father's works, but upon my believing those who assert he did perform such works. And these it appears are unknown writers, living in times of ignorance and superstition when just such stories as they relate would obtain ready currency. For example, there is the ejection of devils whose presence entailed infirmities, such as deafness or dumbness, on the parties possessed. Now we see no such possessions, and are satisfied that such disabilities proceed from physical causes ; and yet Jesus stakes the integrity of his mission on our believing the declarations of people of other days that there were such devils, and that he cast them out. And if we stand in such a predicament as to our faith, what may be the position of those who have never had even that measure of testimony which is presented to us ?

Those without evidence of miracles.

S.—The circumstances of those altogether without the testimony have not been overlooked. The two classes, those with, and those without the testimony, are relatively spoken of, and both come under judgment. Jesus upbraids "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done," saying, "Woe unto thee Chorazin ! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.—If the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin : but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

Inequality of the testimony.

P.—All this appears to me most extraordinary. The question before us is equitable treatment by a divine and impartial judge, and we are presented with dispensations marked with partiality. There is certain testimony offered for acceptance, on which important results depend. There is a universal testimony to the Creator in his works in nature, but that is to avail no one anything. The testimony on which salvation altogether turns is as to certain works out of nature, and those to be judged of relatively to it are circumstanced very differently. There are persons on whom the miracles take effect personally. These have the strongest testimony, as when a man blind from birth has sight conferred upon him, or when Lazarus, knowing himself to have died, finds himself walking out of his sepulchre alive again. There are those who, more or less perfectly and intelligently, witness one or more of these marvellous occurrences. There are the people of the times of the miracles, who, though they may not have been actual spectators themselves, hear of these marvels from persons on whom they may more or less rely, who are located more or less near the scenes of the events, and who witnessed them themselves, or know those who may have witnessed them. Then there are those who must depend for the fact of these occurrences on the written statements of others, some near enough the times in question to have a fair means of judging who the writers were, and what degree of credit may be due to them, and others who may be in times too remote to allow of their having any knowledge of these writers, even as to who

they may have been, in which category we of this day stand. Besides these there are those to whom the special testimony, or means of salvation, never has been, or could be, presented in any shape. What more partial than the results, as declared, it would seem, by Jesus himself? He, in his divine prescience, hesitates not to assure us that had Tyre and Sidon witnessed the works wrought in Chorazin and Bethsaida, they would have repented and not come under judgment, and had Sodom done so, it would have remained to this day. And it is seemingly declared, furthermore, that if the works had not been displayed, there would have been no imputation of sin, and yet those are made to suffer as sinners from whom all knowledge of these works is withheld. I ask, can a measure, such as this system of probation on special testimony, so full of inherent and unavoidable defect, be really from God?

Putting aside, however, all other difficulties, the publication of this testimony was, I presume, made as thoroughly as possible while the marvels were being performed.

Publication of the testimony.

S.—The conduct of Jesus, in spreading abroad the knowledge of his miracles, and therewith making known the nature of his own mission, appears to have varied exceedingly. He said to the maniac out of whom he had cast a legion of devils into the swine, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark v. 19). On giving sight to one born blind, he announced the object of the act to be, "that the works of God should be manifest in him" (John ix. 3). And when about to raise Lazarus from the dead, he offered up special prayer to God, saying that he made his request, not on his own account, as he was aware that God always heard him, but "because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (John xi. 42). On other occasions he took a very different course. After healing a leper, he said, "See thou tell no man" (Matt. viii. 4); "but he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter" (Mark i. 45). After giving sight to two blind men, he "straitly charged them, saying, see that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country" (Matt. ix. 30, 31). "Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that

they should not make him known" (Matt. xii. 15, 16). When about to restore the ruler's daughter to life, "he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John," and when he had brought her to life, "he charged them straitly that no man should know it." (Mark v. 37, 43). On curing a man deaf and with an impediment in his speech, "he charged them that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it" (Mark vii. 36). On bestowing sight on a blind man, he enjoined it on him, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (Mark viii. 26). Peter had recognised him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." After this he conferred upon him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and "then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ" (Matt. xvi. 16-20). He went upon a high mountain, taking Peter, James, and John with him. There he was "transfigured," "and, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." When this apparition was over, "Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (Matt. xvii. 1-9). On meeting with persons possessed with devils, he "suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him" (Mark i. 34). "And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known" (Mark iii. 11, 12).

Reasons for suppressing testimony.

P.—You surprise me much. Is any reason given for Jesus wishing to keep his works and his divine character thus private? To do so was to nullify the purpose of his mission altogether.

S.—On two occasions reasons are recorded. In respect of the leper, it is said that on his disobeying Jesus' instructions, and publishing the miracle wrought on him abroad, he "could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places" (Mark i. 45), and when he charged the "great multitudes" he had healed, not to make him known, this, it is said, was to fulfil a prophecy by Isaiah, to the effect that he was

not to "strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets" (Matt. xii. 17-21).

P.—The first appears to me to be an unsatisfactory reason for conduct so inconsistent with his mission. Surely it was an unworthy thought to suppress the very evidence he was commissioned to spread abroad out of mere personal apprehension of the consequences to himself of being identified with his mission. As regards the second reason, I am unable to perceive the applicability of the prophecy said to have been so fulfilled. What connection is there between its being known that he worked miracles, and his striving and crying, and so creating a disturbance in the streets? And if the suppression of the evidence to his mission was necessary to fulfil this prophecy, then the fulfilment was violated by his taking steps to publish this evidence, as when he told the restored maniac to tell his friends "how great things" had been done for him, and also upon other numerous occasions when he appealed to these his works openly. Nor can I understand what was really expected when these injunctions to suppress the evidence of the miracles were given. Were the parties to falsify the facts, and to say they had got cured in some ordinary manner? Could people whose sight had been suddenly restored be expected to go about saying nothing, as if nothing had happened? And was it likely that when large bodies were dealt with together, the "great multitudes" that were healed, the reserve enjoined could possibly be secured? The order was an irrational one, and was, it appears, constantly unheeded. Is this sort of weak demonstration characteristic of a divine personage? Then again, when he had to offer himself to the world as the Christ, what could be gained by concealing from the world that such was his real character? Were his disciples, after knowing who he actually was, to falsify the fact, and describe him in some other character? I observe too that Peter's recognition of him is ascribed to a special revelation made to him from above, and is said to be a token of blessing. From what quarter did the devils, who all knew him, get their intelligence? And could it in their instances have been associated with what was blessed? I cannot account for so much contradiction and confusion but by supposing that the writers are dealing with unreal facts.

How, after all, did the testimony of the miracles work?

Reception of the testimony.

S.—At the time of performing the miracles, the power was generally considered to be of God, and to stamp Jesus therefore as one coming from God. "No man," said Nicodemus, "can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John iii. 2). "Many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" (John vii. 31). The man blind from birth, to whom he gave sight, in disputing with the unbelieving Jews, said, "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing" (John ix. 32, 33). He therefore was proclaimed to the people by Peter to be "a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts ii. 22). "Many," we are told, "believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did" (John ii. 23; see also John vi. 14; x. 41, 42; xi. 45), so that even those who were opposed to him testified that "the world" had "gone after him" (John xii. 19). But substantially, and effectively, he was not credited. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John i. 11). "What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony" (John iii. 32). And it would appear that the requisitions of prophecy involved his being thus rejected. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him" (John xii. 37-41).

Withholding testimony.

At times Jesus positively refused to put his mission to proof by exhibition of the miraculous power considered to be associated therewith, even attributing sin to those who looked for such a test. To the Pharisees, when making such a demand upon him, he said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;

and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 38-40); resorting to the same evasion, with the same reference to the miracle of Jonah, when on another occasion Pharisees and Sadducees together asked for a sign (Matt. xvi. 4). Mark, however, (viii. 11) has it that the answer given was, "There shall no sign be given unto this generation," as if the appeal to the miraculous never had been, or would be, made in those days. The instances in John are of a similar character. Jesus had been flogging the money-changers and others who were desecrating the temple, and driving them out, on which the Jews asked him for some sign to prove his right so to interfere. On this he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," which is stated to have referred to "the temple of his body," though that certainly, according to the accounts given, cannot be said to have ever been "destroyed." Again, when they asked him, "What sign shewest thou, then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?" referring him for an example to the feeding of the Israelites with manna in the time of Moses, his answer was that his Father could give them "the true bread from heaven," meaning his doctrine (John ii. 18-21; vi. 30-35). It was, in fact, viewed as a reproach to the Jews that they should "require a sign" (1 Cor. i. 22). In a parable Jesus distinctly sets at nought the power of miraculous agency to convert the heart to God. He describes two parties, one in heaven, and the other in hell. The one in hell has a feeling for five brothers he has left behind him on earth, and wishes that the one who is in heaven should be sent "that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." The response is, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." "Nay," says the unhappy interceder, "but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." To which the conclusive reply is given, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 27-31). And in the instance of Jesus himself, he was arrested and put to death as a criminal, the populace loudly calling for his death, and his divine works availing him nothing.

P.—I find it impossible to come to any right understanding of this test of the miracles. At one time it is held out by Jesus as all that he relied upon for proof of his mission; at another he thoroughly discourages such an idea, and refuses to make any such demonstration. And the end of all, so far as results go, is absolute failure. And if, notwithstanding the conflict of statement, the sign of the miracles was offered and relied upon, seeing that the exhibition had no weight with those in whose sight the miracles were enacted, how is it to be supposed that we are to be impressed by them, at this distant date, through mere hearsay?

I see it said that the rejection of this potent testimony was in fulfilment of prophecy, there having been here, as in the case of Pharaoh, the extraordinary exhibition of God holding out miracles in one hand, and then shutting up people's eyes, lest they should see and apprehend them, with the other. I cannot ascribe such double dealing to God. The hardening of the heart by him seems to me, on each occasion, a weak invention, thrown in to account for the non-reception of these miraculous doings.

Power to work miracles to accompany acceptance of faith.

But there is one source of evidence which should be conclusive. You have said that the followers of Jesus were to exhibit the same, or even greater power in miracles, than he had displayed.

S.—Yes, it has certainly been so declared. "These signs," it is stated, "shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 17, 18). "Verily, verily, I say unto you," Jesus declared, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John xiv. 12-14). The demonstration of miraculous power was the appointed means by which the doctrinal teaching was commended to those addressed. The chiefs of the Jewish persuasion, on hearing of Peter's cure wrought on a man who had been a cripple from

birth, tried to put down the movement by coercion. On this the believers, "with one accord," lifted up their cry to God, saying, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal: and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus;" upon which, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together," and the Holy Ghost acted on them in power (Acts iv. 29-31). "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.—And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts v. 12, 14). "The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts viii. 6). Paul and Barnabas also spoke "boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts xiv. 3). Paul said of his own career, "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 18, 19). After this manner the preachers of those days "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark xvi. 20). "How," says Paul, throwing himself into the position of those addressed, "shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Heb. ii. 3, 4). Nor was the enforcement of doctrine by the means of miraculous attestation a mere passing demonstration. The possession and exercise of the power entered into the very constitution and organization of the church, as operating in the character of God's witness on earth in all ages. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given the Spirit of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues;" and the position is enforced by the illustration of the human body, composed of various parts, each with its appropriate office, but all working together for the good of all, as one harmonious whole. And so God, it is added, "has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 4-28).

P.—Here, then, we have something tangible which should be present in the existing day. There is the doctrine, as necessary now to the salvation of mankind as ever. Where are the miracles which were to accompany and confirm it, remaining as "signs" that were to "follow them that believe?"

The signs of miracles now wanting.

S.—There have been none since the days of the apostles but what are recognised as the mere results of trickery, imposition, or misrepresentations. They are comprehended in monkish legends, to which none but the most ignorant give credit.

P.—The case, then, seems complete. The recorders of the miracles staked their veracity on the assertion that miracles not only had been, but should be, explaining also how these miraculous demonstrations entered into the whole body of the system. When, therefore, we see that the miracles which should be, are not, and that the evidence for the present day exists not, how are we to stretch our minds, against all probabilities and experience, to believe all that these same persons say of the days that are not?

PROPHECY.

V.

RENEWED CONVERSATION.

PUNDIT.—We have still to consider the miracles connected with the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

STUDENT.—The history of Jesus is so mixed up with questions of prophecy, as well as of miracle, that perhaps it would be well to reserve entering thereon directly till we have first dealt with the subject of prophecy, so far as to see whether any testimony to the divine authorship of the Bible can be claimed from that source.

P.—Very well. Be pleased to explain to me what sort of reliance is placed upon prophetic utterances as proving the action of God.

The appeal to prophecy.

S.—The power to discern and declare future events is as much beyond the capacity of mere men as that of working miracles. It has consequently been openly appealed to as affording a test whereby to distinguish the true from false gods. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the king of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods" (Isa. xli. 21-23). "Search the scriptures," said Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (John v. 39); and in the accounts of his life the appeal to the events thereof, as being in fulfilment of prophecies, is constantly made. And this description of testimony is held up as more striking, and convincing, than even the plainest ocular demonstrations. "They have Moses and the prophets," Jesus said, "let them

hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 29-31). Peter and two other disciples had been vouchsafed a special manifestation of Jesus in a glorified state, attended by Moses and Elias. Peter adverts to this when he says, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty." But he presents prophecy as a superior source of satisfaction, adding, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 16-21).

P.—Of course, as in the case of working miracles, there has been a liability to deceivers coming forward with pretended prophecies? False prophets.

S.—There has been abundant opening for such deception in the remote times of the Bible, when manifestations of the sort were habitually looked for and trusted in. "Then the Lord said unto me," declares Jeremiah, "the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jer. xiv. 14). "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." "I have not sent them, saith the Lord, yet they prophesy a lie in my name" (Jer. xxiii. 21; xxvii. 15).

P.—How were the people to distinguish between a true and a false prophet? Test of true prophets.

S.—The rule is thus laid down. "The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath

spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. xviii. 20-22).

P.—This rule contemplates only utterances such as were to be fulfilled promptly, within the life-time of the prophet giving them forth. Were there none which related to events of remote accomplishment?

S.—There is room to infer that the prophets treated commonly of what they conceived would shortly be brought to pass, but results have shown that, if their statements are to stand, they must be referred, in most instances, to a distant future. That this was not contemplated when the test to be applied to prophecy was laid down, is apparent.

P.—If the event is to govern the acceptance of the prophecy, then, until the event occurs, however distant the day, no one can say whether the prophecy is to be depended on, and heeded, or not. Under such circumstances, I cannot conceive what can be the utility of prophecy. The event, which controls all, would in due time declare itself and prevail, whether the prophecy were uttered or not.

S.—So it might be thought. Still, as you will observe, we are enjoined to "take heed" unto prophecy, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

P.—This exhortation certainly does not consist with the rule making the integrity of a prophecy to depend upon its realization. However, I presume that this light which is to illuminate us in our natural darkness, at all events shines so clearly as to indicate, without room for mistake, the objects on which it casts its radiance.

Indistinctness of prophecy.

S.—On the contrary, nothing is more difficult than the application of prophecy to the events foretold. In the first place, there are serious differences as to whether prophecies have been, or remain to be, accomplished. The Jews, for example, deny the fulfilment of those predictions of the Messiah which the Christians believe to have been brought to pass in the person and career of Jesus. And over the whole range of the Apocalypse, and the analogous prophecies in Daniel, the Christians are at great issue among themselves in deciding whether fulfilments have taken place or not. In respect of these prophecies, whether those cited in the histories of Jesus, or those in the Apocalypse, it is only by considerable

straining of the language, and accommodation, that seeming fulfilments are made out; and in regard to the adaptation of events to the Apocalypse, the differences, in selecting the events and making the applications thereto, are nearly as numerous as the interpreters.

The prophetic style.

P.—What is this owing to? Surely the language of the prophet should be sufficiently clear to make it apparent at once whether any given event is, or is not, what he pointed to.

S.—One would have thought so, especially in view of the test by which the prophecy was to be judged of. Besides the difficulties inherent to the comprehension of extinct languages, the phraseology of the prophecies is more than ordinarily involved. The prophets appear to have considered themselves privileged to deal in obscurities. "The words of the wise," it was thought, were presented with most effect in "dark sayings" (Prov. i. 6). The prophets are apt to pass from subject to subject without connection, mixing things present with those that are to come, using figurative designations, or actual symbols, changing persons and tenses in an unrestrained manner, and but dimly shadowing forth the objects indicated. With such a foundation to work upon, and where unchallengeable precision is not to be expected, the ingenuity of interpreters has enabled them to adapt the prophecies to any facts they may be pleased to marshal as embraced by them.

The prophets as a body.

P.—Who were the prophets, and under what circumstances did they make their annunciations?

S.—The prophets were a numerous body, and went together in bands, or companies. Samuel told Saul that he should meet "a company of prophets," who should prophecy; and after joining them, "the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them," so that the saying went forth, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam. x. 5-12). When Jezebel was destroying the prophets, Obadiah hid a hundred of them in caves (1 Kings xviii. 4). Four hundred were consulted by the kings of Judah and Israel in respect of their expedition to Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings xxii. 6). Fifty men, "sons of the prophets," accompanied Elijah and Elisha when the former was translated to heaven (2 Kings ii. 7). "Would God," said Moses, "that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them"

(Num. xi. 29). They were ordinarily under the guidance of a chief prophet who presided over them. Thus Samuel is seen "standing as appointed" over a "company of the prophets" (1 Sam. xix. 20). Elisha has a body of "the sons of the prophets" attached to him. These, on one occasion, "bowed themselves to the ground before him;" on another, they are seen "sitting before him;" and it appears that they resided with him (2 Kings ii. 15; iv. 38; vi. 1). Elisha himself was a disciple of Elijah's. "Knowest thou," it was said to him, "that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?" (2 Kings ii. 3).

Prophets excited by music.

The prophets operated under the excitation of music and song. "I will open," said the Psalmist, "my dark saying upon the harp" (Ps. xlix. 4). "Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances," and then we have her utterance (Ex. xv. 20, 21). The company that Saul was sent to meet were to be seen "coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them." David, whose prophesyings are given in the Psalms, was an accomplished musician, and encouraged the art. When the ark was brought back from the land of the Philistines, he "and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets" (1 Chron. xiii. 8; see also xv. 28; xvi. 42). These performances were instituted by the prophets, the injunctions "of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet," being cited for them (2 Chron. xxix. 25). "Moreover, David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph and of Heman, and of Jeduthan, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" (1 Chron. xxv. 1-3). And when Elisha was called upon to see from whence help could come when the armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom were in peril from drought, he said, "Now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him," and he predicted the coming supply, as also the overthrow of the Moabites, against whom the expedition had been formed (2 Kings iii. 11-19).

Extatic excitement of prophets.

This phrase of "the hand of the Lord" coming on the prophets is descriptive of the species of excitement under which they gave forth their utterances, as if by the power of God specially acting on them. When "the hand of the Lord was on Elijah," it roused him to physical exertion; "and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab," (who was on horseback,) "to the entrance of Jezreel" (1 Kings xviii. 46). Ezekiel imagined himself, on such an occasion, bodily transported. "So the Spirit lifted me up," he says, "and took me away; and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me" (Ezek. iii. 14). At other times the visitation introduces him to bewildering visions of a whirlwind, a fiery cloud, and creatures of monstrous form, and of a fiery being who lifts him up "between the earth and the heaven," and carries him elsewhere (Ezek. i. 3-14; viii. 1-4). The impulse thus induced becomes infectious. "And Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied." Saul sends in succession two more parties, who are similarly affected, and join in the prophesying (1 Sam. xix. 20, 21). Saul, we have seen, had himself been so carried away with the spirit of prophecy on joining a company thus engaged.

Prophesying through dreams or visions.

Dreams, or visions of the night, were a vehicle for receiving the prophetic power. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Num. xii. 6). "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully" (Jer. xxiii. 28). "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him," and then was revealed to him the coming bondage of his descendants in Egypt (Gen. xv. 12-14). "Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open;" on which he bursts forth into a prophetic annunciation of the prosperity of Israel (Num. xxiv. 15-19). Jeremiah, after

prophesying of the restoration of the Jews through two chapters, says, "Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me," showing that the whole communication had been given to him in a dream (Jer. xxxi. 26). "Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters," the result being his prophecy of four great kingdoms typified to him as four beasts (Dan. vii. 1). He has another such vision of wars between two powers represented to him in the forms of a ram and a goat butting at one another (viii. 1-7). And in the midst of other such revelations, he says, "Then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground" (x. 9). Zechariah also, when similarly uttering prophecies, tells us, "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep," on which he has further revelations (Zech. iv. 1).

Extravagant action of prophets.

The excitable nature of the prophets led them, as might be expected, to break out in extravagance of action as well as of words. Saul, in his fit of enthusiasm, "stripped off his clothes also," evidently as the others had done, "and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets" (1 Sam. xix. 24)? David, though a crowned monarch, "danced before the Lord with all his might," when bringing in the ark to the sound of music (2 Sam. vi. 14). Elijah, as we have already seen, girt himself and ran before Ahab's horse. Isaiah, in prosecution of his prophetic exhibitions, goes "unto the prophetess" and procreates children, to whom significant names are given. "Behold," he exclaims, "I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts" (Isa. viii. 3, 18), of which children we, however, hear no more. He dressed, it appears, in sackcloth, and on one occasion imagined he had received an order from God to throw off his clothing, and to go about naked for a term of years. "And the Lord said," he tells us, "like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot" (xx. 2-4); a sign, be it

remarked, to be exhibited to the Egyptians and Ethiopians, rather than to the Israelites, and for which there is no recorded fulfilment. Ezekiel fancied that he devoured a roll inscribed with denunciations against his people. "Son of man," he thought it said to him, "be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold an hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll." Then he is told to go and communicate the words to the Israelites, but was at the same time warned, "the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee" (Ezek. ii. 8-10; iii. 1-7), so that the exhibition went for nothing. Afterwards, the spirit takes him up and carries him to the captives of his people by the river of Chebar. And he says, "I sat where they sat, and remained astonished among them seven days," at the close of which he receives further communications (iii. 14-16). His patience underwent a severer trial. He was told by his divine monitor to make a mock siege of Jerusalem with a tile and an iron pan. "This," it was said, "shall be a sign to the house of Israel," but scarcely of a description to impress them. And then he was required to lie three hundred and ninety days on his left side to represent that he was in some way bearing the sins of the house of Israel, and forty on his right side for the sins of Judah, each day signifying a year. And it was said, "behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege." And then his daily portion of food and drink was prescribed to him, and he was to bake it with human ordure, afterwards changed at his remonstrance to that of the cow (iv. 1-17). Here we have a representation of a siege of Jerusalem for the astounding period of four hundred and thirty years. By whom maintained it is not said, nor, of course, has there been any such fulfilment. Hosea imagined that to him was assigned the revolting task of raising up children, at one time from a harlot, at another from

an adulteress, acts predictive of judgments on Israel, and which he accordingly carried out (Hos. i. 1-11; iii. 1-5).

The stated prophets.

It is not to be supposed that the numerous persons who are designated prophets were continually engaged in giving forth predictions. That was a power exercised only occasionally, and probably but by few of them. They occupied themselves in thanksgivings and praises of God, which are accounted as "prophesyings" (1 Chron. xxv. 3). Some of the prophetic annunciations are given in methodical form, while others are scattered here and there in the midst of historic narrative and poetic effusions, in which latter certain of the prophets, such as Isaiah and the Psalmists, largely indulge. The stated prophets, whose writings have been handed down to us, are in the Old Testament but sixteen in number. In the New Testament, the four evangelists record predictions attributed to Jesus, and the Apocalypse is devoted to the subject, as the title of the book, namely a Revelation, indicates.

Prophecies recorded after events.

P.—In a former conversation you showed that the writings of the Old Testament were apparently put into their present shape not earlier than the time of Ezra. How does such a conclusion bear upon the so-called prophecies as predictions made before the events described therein took place?

S.—Very decidedly. The prophecies relate to what was to befal the Jews as a nation, to judgments on other nations surrounding them, and to their expected Messiah. Taking the return from the captivity in Babylon, or the time of Ezra, as a standing point, much of the history had already been accomplished when the scriptures were made public by Ezra and Nehemiah. No announcement, consequently, of events that had then gone by, can be accepted as predictions of them before their occurrence, although put forward in the form of prophecies. It would be as if, in the present day, a book were issued, in the pages of which were introduced, as prophecies, events of the times of William the Conqueror or Charles the First.

Eras of the prophets.

P.—At what time did the stated prophets live?

S.—The earliest of these is Jonah, who is thought to have written about B.C. 862. No testimony for the Bible can, however, be deduced from his prophecy, for it consisted merely in a denunciation against Nineveh, which, even by his own showing, was not fulfilled. He professes to have been

commissioned by God to announce to the Ninevites that in forty days their city was to be overthrown, and adds, that on their humbling themselves in penitence, "God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (iii. 4, 10). This, you will observe, indicates a want of prescience in the prophet, and a change of purpose in God, not consistent with divine operations. It is this prophet, moreover, who gives out the incredible story of being swallowed up by a whale. I will then class six together in the order in which they are said to have written, namely Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Nahum, who are thought to have flourished from B.C. 800 to B.C. 713. These, you will observe, are embraced within the limits of a century. After this I will so classify eight more, namely Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Haggai, and Zechariah, who are said to have written from B.C. 630 to B.C. 519, the last occupying from the latter year to B.C. 487. These therefore took up rather more than a century; and within that century was embraced the captivity in Babylon, which lasted from B.C. 599 to B.C. 536. This body of eight are therefore associated with the time of Ezra. There remains the prophet Malachi who is supposed to have written in B.C. 397. The result is, that taking into view the two thousand years of the history of the Jews, namely from Abraham to the Christian dispensation, we have but two periods, of about a century each, occurring in the latter half of that era, replete with prophetic writings, and a void of any such productions during the remaining time.

P.—I gather from what you tell me that prophecy must have induced prophecy; namely, that at certain periods, and there seem to have been but two such, and both of but limited extent, a spirit of prophesying arose and spread itself from man to man. Seeing the excitement to which these persons were subject, especially when in contact with one another, the thought naturally presents itself, that their predictions sprang from human influences of time and circumstance, and not from divine inspiration. Half of these prophets, for example, lived in or near the time of the captivity, which you have already noticed was one of religious ferment and literary activity, when just such effusions might be naturally expected. Is the authenticity of these writings beyond dispute?

Authenticity of Isaiah and Daniel questioned.

Isaiah composite.

S.—Two, and those in which the most important manifestations are made, namely Isaiah and Daniel, are much called in question.

The writings ascribed to Isaiah are evidently of a composite order. There is so marked a transition at the end of the 39th chapter that it is common among critics to speak of a first and a second Isaiah, as the respective authors of these two divisions. Hengstenberg, who labours to support the integrity of the scriptures, is driven to recognise the diversity of style and subject which has led others to ascribe these portions to different writers. "The first part," he observes, "containing the predictions which the prophet uttered for the present generation, during the time of his ministry, consists mainly of single prophecies which, separated by time and occasion, were first made publicly known singly, and afterwards united in a collected whole, having been marked out as different prophecies, either by inscriptions or in any other distinguishable way,—the second part, destined as a legacy for posterity, forms a continuous, collected whole." The one, he calls, "the rebuking and threatening mission of the prophet," and the other "the comforting mission." "If it be acknowledged," he says, "that the prophesying activity of Isaiah falls into two great divisions, the one, contained in the first thirty-nine chapters, pre-eminently destined for the present, the other, chiefly for the future;" this, he appears to think, accounts for the variation of style, evidencing merely the versatility of the writer.[1]

There are passages in Isaiah which are common to other writers, and show that the one has copied from the other, or that both have made use of a common document. Thus chap. ii. 2-4 is identical with Micah iv. 1-3; chap. xiii. 6 with Joel i. 15; and chap. lii. 7 with Nahum i. xv. Chapters xv. and xvi., which are entitled "The burden of Moab," come from some older record, of which it is said, "This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab since that time;" contrasted with which is introduced a fresh prophecy, thus, "But now the Lord hath spoken, saying," &c. (xvi. 13, 14); and there is an historical passage, occupying from chapter xxxvi. to xxxix., which is taken from three chapters in the 2d book of Kings, namely, chapters xviii. 13 to xx. 19. Now the

[1] Christology of Old Testament, II. 164, 166, 174, 193.

book of Kings closes with the captivity in Babylon, bringing the compilation ascribed to Isaiah, consequently, onwards to that time. It becomes therefore quite accountable that Cyrus should be referred to by name in Isaiah as the deliverer of the people from this captivity.

—brought to period of captivity.

The particulars I have above made use of are pointed out by Dr Rowland Williams in his work on the Hebrew prophets. He treats of what critics calls the first Isaiah, and shows this portion to be of a very composite order. In the chapters from i. to xv. some marked transitions occur. Chapters i. to xii. relate to the "days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," and the invasions of the Assyrians in the two latter reigns, concluding with the year B.C. 710. The Assyrian rule gave place to that of Babylon. At chapter xiii. we have "the Burden of Babylon," ending at chapter xiv. 23. This refers to the overthrow of the Babylonish dynasty by Cyrus, which took place from B.C. 550 to 530; after which, in chapter xiv. 23-27, the earlier and expired empire of Assyria is again brought on the field. The Burden of Babylon has thus been thrust, by some compiler, into the midst of what related to Assyria nearly two centuries earlier. Then the 14th chapter concludes with what respects the times of Ahaz, and this must be out of place, as the earlier portion, concluding with chapter xii., had been brought down to the posterior reign of Hezekiah.

Transitions from times of Assyria to times of Babylon.

After this, from chapter xv. to the end of chapter xix., there are various "burdens," or denunciations, namely, of Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, and Egypt. These have the character of distinct productions, and the burden of Moab, as already pointed out, appears to have come from an older source.

Detached prophecies.

Then chapter xx. brings us again to the Assyrian empire, when the king's general, Tartan, invaded Ashdod in the land of the Philistines (2 Kings xviii. 17), or B.C. 710. At chapter xxi., as far as verse 10, there is a leap forwards to the fall of Babylon, B.C. 550 to 530. After this, to the close of chapter xxiii., come various "burdens," namely, of Idumea, Arabia, the Valley of Vision, and of Tyre, all seemingly distinct productions. The burden of the Valley of Vision relates to Jerusalem in the times of Eliakim and Shebna the scribe (2 Kings xviii. 18), when we are taken back to the reign of Hezekiah, or B.C. 710.

Times of Assyria and of Babylon.

From chapter xxiv. to the end of chapter xxxiii. are a group of utterances expressive of lamentation, hopes of redemption, visitation on Samaria, the downfall of Assyria, and the re-establishment of Jerusalem. This, Dr Williams concludes, is "the probable end of the primary Isaiah," whose out-pourings, however, have been interrupted in various ways by the introduction of distinct predictions from independent hands, as already pointed out.

Idumea.

Chapters xxxiv. and xxxv. relate to a judgment on Idumea and the renovation of Judea. From style and matter Dr Williams considers this the production of another writer, who may have lived about B.C. 500. After this comes the extract already referred to from the 2d book of Kings, which closes with the thirty-ninth chapter.

The final section given in three parts.

The concluding section, from the fortieth chapter to the end, is recognised as the work of one and the same writer. It is replete with exalted thoughts of the deity, given forth in noble language and in poetic strain. This section consists of three pieces which have been brought together by some editing hand. The first announces comfort to Israel and the downfall of Babylon, the deliverer Cyrus being introduced by name. The prophet, writing however as if the speech were that of God, prides himself in being able thus precisely to designate his hero. "I have surnamed thee," he says, "though thou hast not known me" (xlv. 4). "There was an interval," observes Dr Williams, "according to Herodotus, between the first conflict of Cyrus with the Babylonians and his capture of their city," during which an exiled Jew, excited by the surrounding influences, may have seen in the sword of Cyrus the intervention of Jehovah.[1] Or, which is even more probable, these utterances may have occurred after the event. The prophet, observes Hengstenberg, takes his stand in the time of the captivity.[2] The first section closes at chapter xlviii. with the words, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." The next ends with the same words at the termination of chapter lvii. The third is contained in the remaining nine chapters. The subject of these portions is the redemption and renovation of the Jewish people, with passages pointing to their Messiah.

[1] Hebrew Prophets, 293. [2] Christology of Old Testament, II. 169.

The prophecies that have come down to us in the name of Isaiah, consist thus of different predictions, by separate writers, which have been put together, without regard to subject or order of time, some of which may be ascribed to the true Isaiah who lived in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 2) B.C. 710, and others that must be attributed to various persons of later days, spreading over some two centuries more, and bringing us to that period so prolific in biblical literature, namely that of the return of the exiles from the captivity in Babylon.

Daniel not in Hebrew canon.

The book of Daniel is cast in the time of the captivity, but is evidently of a much later day. Its origin is even of a more untrustworthy character than that of Isaiah. In the Hebrew scriptures this work has no place with those of the other fifteen prophets who are considered inspired, but appears in a subsequent collection together with Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Esther, Chronicles, and Psalms, which, though accounted sacred writings, are so in a lower sense. Daniel is not mentioned by Haggai and Zechariah, who come close after the return from the captivity, nor by Ezra or Nehemiah. The author of the apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, who is supposed to have written B.C. 200, in citing the praises of the distinguished persons of his people, notices, among others, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and the twelve prophets, meaning evidently those termed the minor prophets, from Hosea to Malachi (chaps. xlviii. and xlix.), but he says not a word of Daniel. And in the Septuagint, the apocryphal writings called the History of Susannah, the Prayer of Azarias followed by the Song of the Three Children, and Bel and the Dragon, are incorporated and mixed in with the book of Daniel. The Chaldee of Daniel, says Dr Rowland Williams, is more allied to that of the Targums or Chaldee paraphrases of the Hebrew scriptures, than to that of Ezra. In the History of Susannah, which is bound up with Daniel, is a Greek play upon a word, and the terms used in Daniel (iii. 5, 10, 15) for harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, are Greek.[1]

—associated with Apocrypha.

—brought to Grecian times.

Josephus, to uphold the prophetic character of the work, as well as to exalt his nation, has a story of Alexander the Great

[1] Daniel, by the Rev. P. S. Desprez, with Introduction by Dr Rowland Williams, xi.-xix., xxiv., xxv. ; also 11, 14-17.

having seen the high priest Jaddua in a dream, and been encouraged by him to conquer Asia; and of Alexander marching from Tyre to Jerusalem, when the same high priest, in bodily person, met him, and showed him the predictions concerning himself in Daniel. This, however, is understood to be a scene dressed up by Josephus four centuries after the period of Alexander, none of the Greek historians having knowledge of any such march upon Jerusalem.[1]

The fact is, whatever is historical in Daniel, namely the prevalence of the dominion, first of Persia, and then of Greece, after the overthrow of the Babylonish power; the struggles between the successors of Alexander in Syria and Egypt, depicted as the kings of the north and the south; and the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, styled the "vile person," though presented in form of prophecy, must have been written after the events. The victories of the Maccabees could not have been overlooked had the writer been endowed with prevision; but, occurring after his time, and lying thus beyond the field of his knowledge, they have no place in the book.

—unreal in statements.

Desprez points out various particulars indicating the unreliability of the writer, some relating to himself, and some to the Babylonish dynasties, with the particulars of which he must have been well acquainted, had he lived in those days, and held, as he represents, a high office in the state.

There are circumstances, such as that Nebuchadnezzar set up an image of gold of the stupendous height of sixty cubits, or a hundred feet; that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remained unscathed in a fiery furnace, and Daniel untouched by hungry lions in a den; and that Nebuchadnezzar, becoming mad, lived upon "grass as oxen" for seven years, which are of an unreal character, showing a similarity of type between this book and the apocryphal writings with which it was originally incorporated. Of himself, Daniel says that he "continued unto the first year of King Cyrus" (i. 21). What became of him afterwards is not stated, and the phrase is such as to raise the inference that he was not his own historiographer. But overlooking this limit, the writer afterwards

[1] Daniel, by Desprez, xxxv., xxxvi., 15, 16.

speaks of a vision he had "in the third year of Cyrus" (x. 1); and elsewhere he leaves it to be concluded that he flourished throughout that reign. "So this Daniel," he says, "prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (vi. 28). In one place (i. 5) he intimates that he and others were maintained for three years, "that at the end thereof they might stand before the king." At another (ii. 1, 13-16), we find him recognised in the second year of the reign among the wise men, or magicians, of the realm, on whom the king habitually depended, and having liberty of access to him as such. And had he been a real character, writing his own history, he could not have indulged in the self-praise appearing in various passages of the book (i. 19, 20; v. 11, 12; vi. 3, 4). In the historical parts, from chapter i. to vi., the third person is employed; and in the prophetical, from chapter vii. to the end, the first person is used, and in an ostentatious manner.

Historic errors.

As respects historic particulars, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have besieged Jerusalem in the third year of king Jehoiakim (i. 1); whereas, according to Jeremiah (xxv. 1), he did not come to his throne till the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Moreover, near the close of his fifth year Jehoiakim was still ruling in peace (Jer. xxxvi. 9); and Nebuchadnezzar, we eventually see, did not come against Jerusalem till Jehoiakim had reigned there eleven years (2 Chron. xxxvi. 5, 6). In Daniel (v. 2, 11, 18), Belshazzar is represented to have been the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, and the downfall of the kingdom is stated to have occurred in his time; whereas, pursuant to Jeremiah (lii. 31), Evil-Merodach was his successor, and the kingdom was not to be overthrown till the days of Nebuchadnezzar's son's son (xxvii. 7). At the taking of the city, Belshazzar is said to have been slain (Dan. v. 30), but pursuant to history the then ruler of Babylon was spared and made governor of a principality.[1] The succession, according to Josephus, was from Nebuchadnezzar to Evil-Merodach, who reigned eighteen years; then to his son Niglissar or Neriglissar, who reigned forty years; afterwards to his son Laborsordacus, who lasted but nine months; and then to Baltasar or Naboardelus in whose time was the conquest by Cyrus.[2] The book

[1] Desprez's Daniel, 28.

[2] Idem, 57, note.

of Daniel, observes Dr Williams, "presents four kings in succession, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus, whom no discoverable history arranges in that order, even could the identity of Belshazzar or Darius the Mede be ascertained."[1]

Apocalypse founded on book of Enoch and Daniel.

The Apocalypse, the only professed prophetical work in the New Testament, is equally unreliable in its origin. It is largely derived from the apocryphal book of Enoch, as I have shown on a previous occasion; and Desprez, citing some other writer, traces out its obligations to Daniel. "From Daniel" the author of the Apocalypse "takes his historical conception of Pagan empire, arising brute-like out of the sea; his vision of the Son of Man; his king of the fierce countenance; his Michael, the great prince, the guardian angel of the sacred Hebrew nation; his resurrection, judgment, and kingdom of God." Both books, Desprez observes, appear to have been written under circumstances of persecution for conscience sake. In the one, there is a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time;" in the other, there is "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." The one speaks of many who "shall be purified and made white and tried," and the other of the souls of white-robed martyrs crying under the altar for vengeance. These persecutions endure, according to Daniel, for "a time, times and an half," "a thousand two hundred and ninety days" being also mentioned, while the periods in the Apocalypse are "a time, times, and half a time," and "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." The angelic messenger of Daniel is described as clothed in linen, girded with gold, with eyes as lamps of fire, feet like polished brass, and a voice like that of a multitude, on seeing whom Daniel fell on his face; particulars all adopted by the author of the Apocalypse for the Son of Man, at whose feet he fell. The personage in Daniel stands on the waters of the rivers, and raising his hands swears that the period shall be for a time, times, and a half; while an angel in the Apocalypse, standing upon the sea and lifting up his hand, swears that time shall be no longer. Many other resemblances follow, presenting such an amount of "verbal imitation" as to make the one book "a transcript" of the other.[2]

[1] Desprez's Daniel, xlvii. and p. 28. [2] Idem, 218-240.

Prophecy on Babylon taken from Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The judgment on Babylon in the Apocalypse, though almost universally applied to another city than the ancient capital of Chaldea, is expressed in terms evidently taken from Isaiah and Jeremiah. There are in common between them its whoredom or idolatries (Rev. xvii. 1, 2; Jer. l. 38); its sitting "on many waters," or domineering over other countries (Rev. xvii. 1, 15, 18; Jer. xxvii. 2, 3, 6, 7; li. 13); its corruption of these lands of whose wine "all nations have drunk" (Rev. xvii. 2, 5; xviii. 3; Jer. li. 7); its "mouth opened in blasphemy against God—and them that dwell in heaven," impelling it to say, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:—I will be like the Most High" (Rev. xiii. 5-8; xvii. 3, 5; Isa. xiv. 4, 12-14; Jer. l. 29; li. 53); its greatness, making it pre-eminently "Babylon the great," "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms," "the praise of the whole earth" (Rev. xvii. 5; Isa. xiii. 19; xiv. 4; xlvii. 5, 8; Jer. li. 41); its fall;—"Babylon is fallen, is fallen," says the one prophet, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," re-echoes the other (Rev. xiv. 8; xviii. 2; Isa. xxi. 9); its occupation by every foul spirit" and "every unclean and hateful bird." "Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there, and dragons in their pleasant palaces" (Rev. xviii. 2; Isa. xiii. 21, 22; Jer. l. 39; li. 37). "Come out of her, my people," says the one prophet, "that ye be not partakers of her sins, for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities;" as had exclaimed the other, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, my people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord" (Rev. xviii. 4, 5; Jer. li. 6, 9, 45). "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works. How much she hath glorified herself, so much torment and sorrow give her." "As she hath done, do even to her. Recompense her according to her work; for she hath been proud against the Lord, against the Holy One of Israel" (Rev. xviii. 6, 7; Jer. l. 15, 29). "For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire." "Come down," had said the earlier prophet, "and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon.—

Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever.—I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood.—Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them: they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame" (Rev. xviii. 7, 8; Isa. xlvii. 1-14). "For strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." "Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name" (Rev. xviii. 8; Jer. l. 34). "The kings of the earth shall bewail her—the merchants of the earth—and every ship-master—weeping and wailing." "At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations" (Rev. xviii. 9, 11, 17, 19; Jer. l. 46). "When they shall see the smoke of her burning. They shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment." "And Babylon shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." "I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about. I will make thee a burnt mountain" (Rev. xviii. 9, 15; Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. l. 32; li. 25, 58). "In one hour is thy judgment. In one hour so great riches is come to nought. In one hour is she made desolate." "Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly." "Destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left." "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed" (Rev. xviii. 10, 17, 19; Isa. xlvii. 11; Jer. l. 26; li. 8). "Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!" "How hath the golden city ceased! Thy pomp is brought down to the grave." "Thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate, the lady of kingdoms." "Abundant in treasures, thine end is come" (Rev. xviii. 16; Isa. xiv. 4, 11; xlvii. 1, 3, 5; Jer. li. 13). "Rejoice over her; for God hath avenged you on her." "Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her." "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee—saying, since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us" (Rev. xviii. 20; Jer. li. 48; Isa. xiv. 5-8). She is to fall "like a great millstone cast into the sea.—Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more;" a figure used by the earlier prophet

who likened her fall to a "stone cast into the midst of Euphrates." "Thus," he added, "shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Rev. xviii. 21; Jer. li. 63, 64). In all these prophecies sorceries are imputed to her, and the blood of the saints, and that of all slain on earth (Rev. xviii. 23, 24; Isa. xiv. 4-7; xlvii. 6, 12; Jer. l. 11, 23, 28, 33, 34; li. 4, 5, 24, 25, 35-37, 49).

The Apocalypse is thus not an independent record, but derived from other sources, and some of them clearly unauthentic; and it is not to be wondered at that in the early ages it was by considerable bodies not acknowledged as an inspired oracle, and was finally admitted into the canon of the scriptures with hesitation and difficulty.

P.—Thank you. You certainly show the hand of man to have been freely used in these productions. Isaiah, I perceive, may be in portions the genuine work of the prophet bearing that name, but whoever interspersed and incorporated therewith the effusions of the other nameless writers, may have been also guilty of tampering with the original record. The other two works, namely Daniel and the Apocalypse, it seems to me, deserve to be placed among those Apocrypha with which they are found so intimately associated.

I must say, in view of what you have now put before me, I expect little satisfaction from what are called the prophetic writings. Still I should be glad to have as full an idea of their nature and title to consideration as you can conveniently give me.

S.—The subject is a lengthy one, requiring arrangement and considerable attention. I can best introduce it to you by putting into your hands a paper I have by me, in which the chief prophecies are set forth, and their merits discussed with freedom. This you can return to me at your leisure.

PROPHECY.

VI.

THE PROPHECIES DISCUSSED.

THE prophecies relating to the Jewish nation naturally first present themselves to notice. The most marked interpositions of God, in miraculous action, are considered to have been in their favour, and their existing state, as associated with their past history, is commonly appealed to as presenting standing tokens of the accomplishment of prophecy.

The bondage in Egypt.

(1.) God is stated to have announced to Abraham, prophetically, that his descendants were to undergo bondage in Egypt, but as the Pentateuch contains indications of having been put together subsequent to the captivity in Babylon, or nearly a thousand years after the exodus from Egypt, it is apparent that what relates to the Israelites while in Egypt cannot be accepted as the result of pre-vision. This so-called prophecy, moreover, though requiring preciseness of fulfilment, is not shown to have met therewith. The terms are, "know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.—In the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (Gen. xv. 13, 16). It is not possible to reconcile these terms together, for four generations cannot be made to spread over such a period as four hundred years. The Bible chronologists steer clear of this difficulty, but only by reducing the stay in Egypt and so falsifying the prophecy. The migration is placed at B.C. 1706, and the exodus at B.C. 1491, leaving an interval of but two hundred and fifteen years. And this has still to be lowered. The period of the prophecy relates to the time during which the Israelites were to "serve"

the Egyptians and be "afflicted" by them. This condition of servitude was not imposed upon them until after the death of Joseph and all his generation, and was the act of some king who had had no knowledge whatever of Joseph (Ex. i. 6-8). Now Joseph is represented to have died at the age of a hundred and ten, in B.C. 1635, or seventy-one years after the migration. Supposing even that he was the last survivor of his generation, and that the persecution set in the year after his death, which in itself is against probability, there remain but a hundred and forty-four years to the exodus to set against the four hundred of the prophecy. And then there is an attempt to show exactitude in the fulfilment of the prophecy, in which the limitation of the time to the period of the persecution is again overlooked, and a fresh error introduced. "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex. xii. 40, 41). Why, in this aim at precision, even to a day, the four hundred years should have been converted into four hundred and thirty, it is hard to understand.

The Jews to form a great nation.

(2.) When Abraham was called out from his own country into Canaan, certain promises were made him. "I will make of thee," God said, "a great nation. In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered" (Gen. xii. 2, 3; xiii. 16). These promises have not been fulfilled. As a people, the descendants of Abraham occupied a region representing a space of but about two hundred and ten miles, by an average breadth of seventy. They found it difficult to hold their own with the petty tribes around them, and when they came into collision with any of the considerable states, were at once brought under their subjection. They have never been "a great nation," or of the least importance in the world as a people. They failed to attract the notice of ancient historians. "Herodotus, writing of Egypt on one side, and of Babylon on the other, visiting both places, and of course almost necessarily passing within a few miles of Jerusalem," and writing even of Syria, makes no mention of the existence of this people.

Diodorus Siculus says nothing of them. They are passed over in silence by Pythagoras and Plato. Alexander the Great ignored them, to remedy which Josephus has forged the passage of his interview with the high priest Jaddua.[1] Insignificant as they were when united, after the reign of their third king, Solomon, they split up into two petty states that were in constant warfare with each other. Throughout their sacred history they were steeped in idolatries, engaged in struggles with their enemies, torn by internal dissensions, repeatedly subject to the dominion of oppressors, and at times carried off bodily into captivity. Unblessed themselves, they have assuredly proved no blessing to any other people, far less to the earth at large.

Grant of promised land.

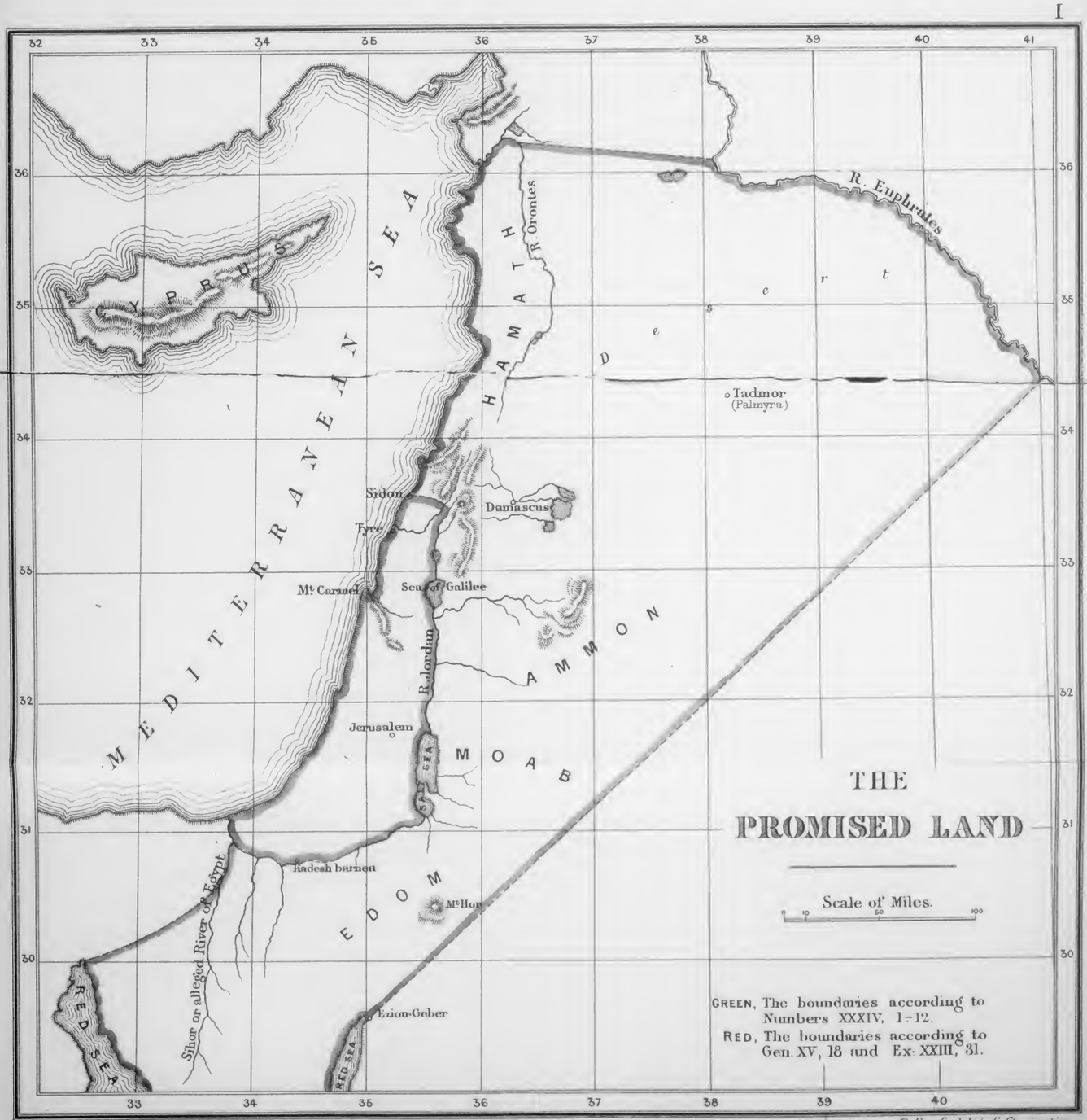
(3.) Their land is said to have been conferred upon them specially by God. "Lift up now thine eyes," Abraham was told, "and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.—Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. xiii. 14-17).

Boundaries of the land.

In making a gift of land, it is reasonable to expect that the limits of the grant should be accurately defined. But nothing can be more uncertain than the area conferred upon the Israelites. Abraham was told that the possession should extend "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18); and elsewhere it is specified that the "bounds" should be "from the Red Sea, even unto the sea of the Philistines." (Ex. xxiii. 31), This may be said to embrace the Peninsula of Sinai, reaching northwards to the line of the Orontes and Euphrates. It might even comprehend all Arabia from the Nile to the Persian Gulf.[2] But when we come to the actual occupation of the land, when the boundaries are described with details aiming at exact precision, the grant becomes so reduced in its limits as to be entirely irreconcileable with the promise to Abraham.

This account appears in Exodus xxxiv. There were three contiguous tribes with whom the Israelites were associated, that is the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites. The limits given in the prior statements, reaching from the Red Sea to the Euphrates, would include the whole of their possessions;

[1] Higgins' Anacalypsis, I. 432, 772, 773. [2] See Keith's Land of Israel.



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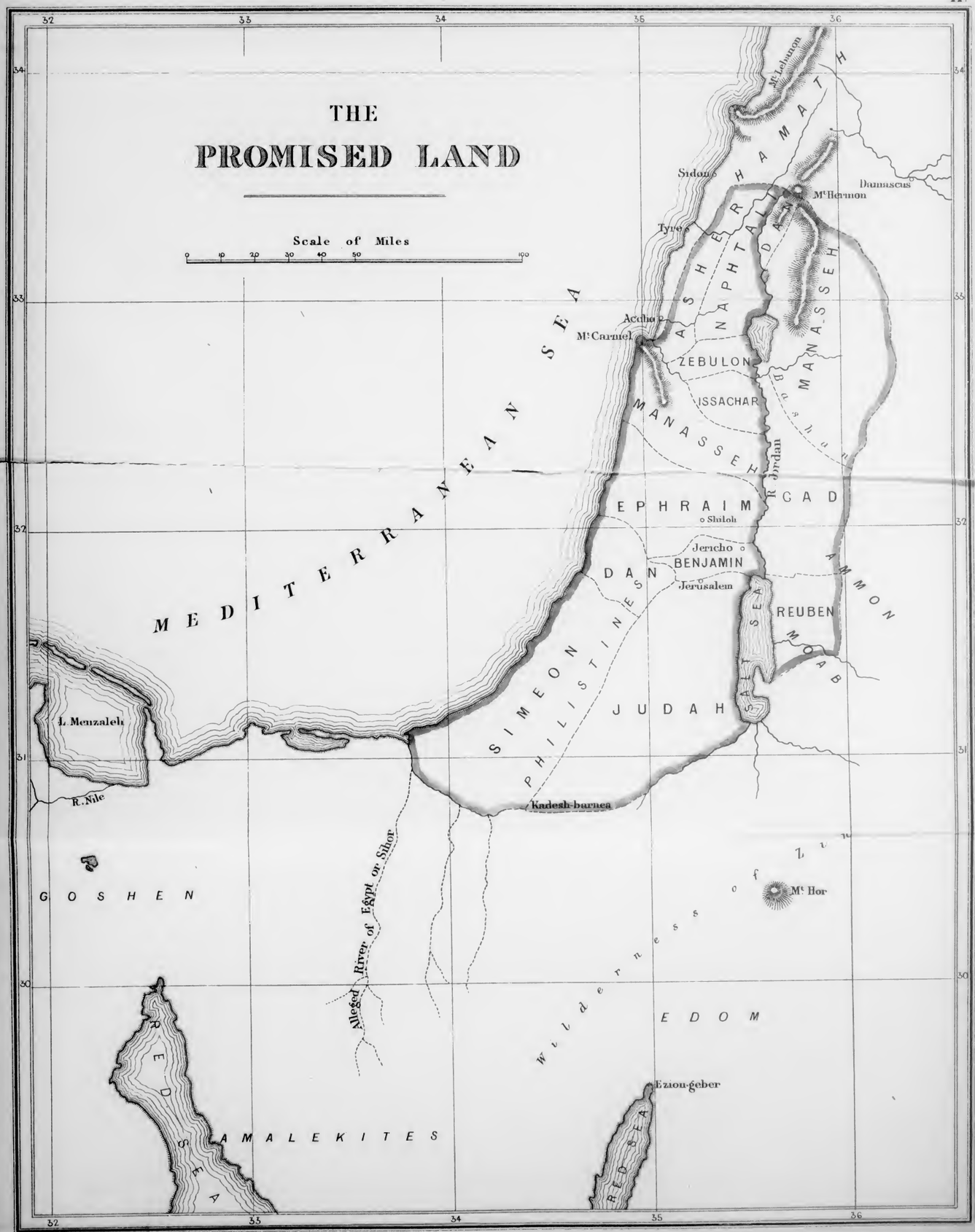

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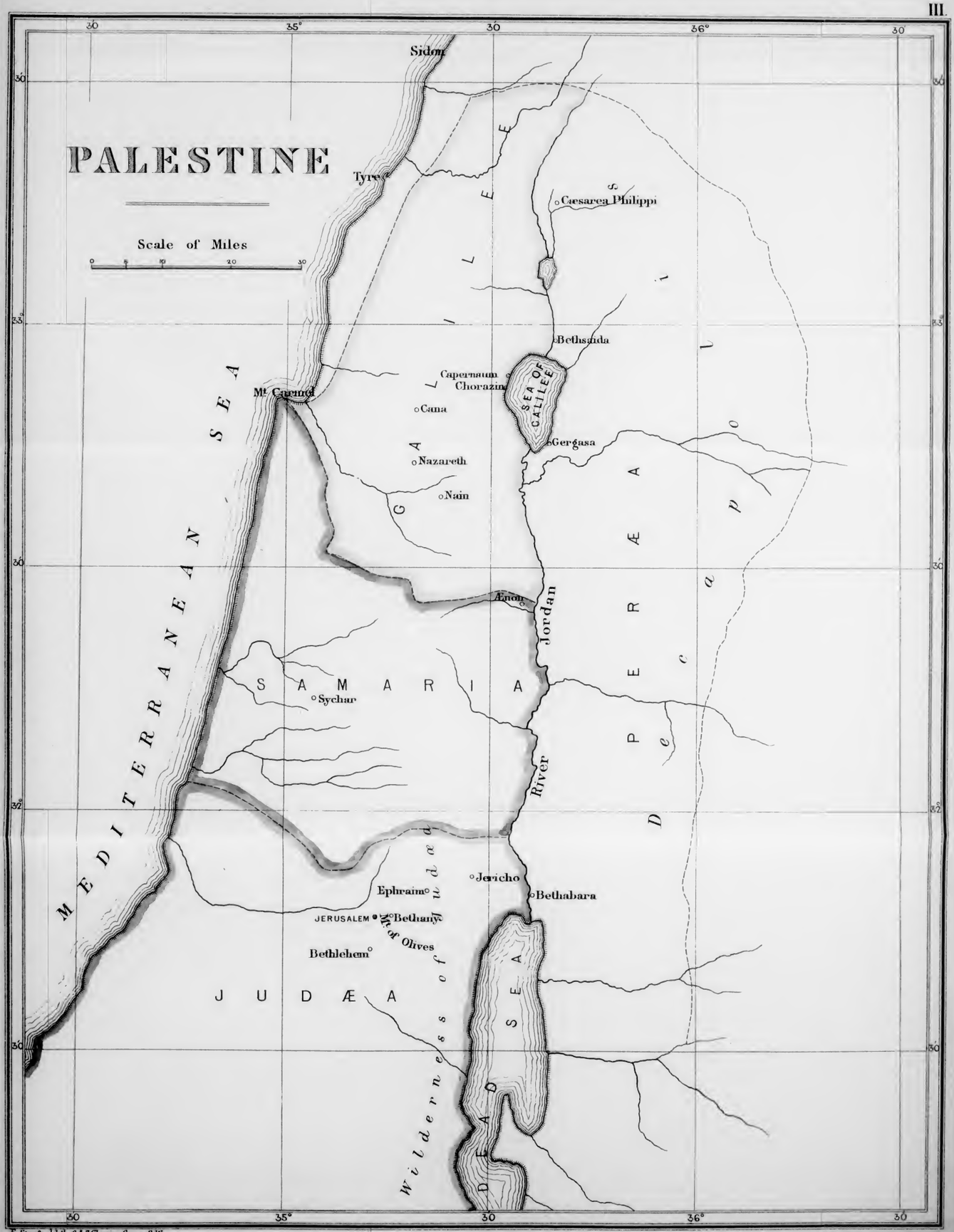

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but, on the other hand, we find, at the period of the occupation, that these tribes were not to be interfered with, their lands being reserved to them because of their consanguinity to the Israelites. Accordingly a boundary is then laid down excluding them.

"Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite," the Israelites were cautioned, "for he is thy brother" (Deut. xxiii. 7). The direct route to be pursued by the Israelites would take them through the land of the Edomites, and they asked for a passage. To this they had been encouraged by a positive assurance from God. "Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau (they were told), which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you" (Deut. ii. 4). The event, however, proved otherwise. A most conciliatory message was sent on the part of the Israelites to the Edomites to induce them to let them pass through, but this Arab horde, not fearing the Israelitish host, numbering, as they did, six hundred thousand God-led, fighting men, turned out against them "with much people," and "with a high hand" drove them from their border, and so Israel meekly prosecuted their journey by some other way (Num. xx. 14-21). The Edomites were descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob, and the Moabites and Ammonites were the progeny of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. All aggression on the territories of these tribes was strictly prohibited. "Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no not so much as a footbreadth; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.—When thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon distress them not, nor meddle with them; for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession" (Deut. ii. 5, 19). The interdict as to Edom and Ammon included Moab, who lay between them. The border laid down in Exodus xxxiv., running along the line of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, carried out these arrangements, placing the land of Israel clear of, and within, the territories of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. It becomes, consequently, inexplicable that the grant should ever have been expressed elsewhere in terms to absorb the whole of these interdicted regions.

The difficulties, however, extend still further. The object

of Moses was to keep the Israelites within the limits assigned to them, in obedience to the command he had received from God. "This," he was told, "is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof;" and then the particular bounds thereof were described to him, including the Eastern boundary as running in the line of the Jordan. But as the people came to enter upon the possession, two tribes and a half, or nearly one-fourth of the host, insisted upon taking up their lots outside the border, eastward of the Jordan, thus also encroaching upon the possessions of Moab and Ammon. And yet, in spite of all these blemishes, the irreconcilable accounts of what constituted the possession assigned, and the wilful and independent act of a large section of the people in helping themselves to lands where they pleased to make their selection, we are called upon to view the land of Israel as a special grant to this people, pre-ordained and conferred upon them by God.

Confining ourselves, however, to the boundaries described in detail in the account appearing in Ex. xxxiv., incertitude is still the character of the grant. One limit to the southward was what is called "the river of Egypt." This would naturally mean the Nile. But the Israelites, after quitting Egypt, never had footing on its banks, and were in fact to be kept clear of that region. "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way" it was enjoined upon them (Deut. xvii. 16). Interpreters, therefore, ordinarily select an insignificant stream more to the eastward to which they hesitate not to apply the distinguishing name of "the river of Egypt;" but "what river this was," says the more candid Michaelis, "is uncertain."[1] The northern boundary is also uncertain. It was to take off from the coast of the Mediterranean in the direction of Mount Hor, and to run by the entrance of Hamath through Zedad and Ziphron to Hazarenan. There is a Mount Hor spoken of as "in the edge of the land of Edom" (Num. xxxiii. 37), where Aaron died; but that being to the southward is not the mount in question. "In geography," says Michaelis, referring to the mount under consideration, "we know nothing of mount Hor,"[2] nor are Zedad, Ziphron, or Hazarenan, laid down in any map. "The entrance

[1] On the Laws of Moses, I. 64. [2] Idem, I. 59.

of Hamath," or a valley leading into the district so called, is alone discernible.

Possession of the land.

The title of the Israelites to the land of Canaan, as depending upon a grant from God, is thus wanting in the essential of definitiveness to show in what the grant consisted. It is also wanting in another feature belonging to such a title, namely that it should be accompanied by possession. The land had been in the occupation of other people from time immemorial. If God deprived these of their right, and conferred their territories upon the Israelites, there should have been some act on his part expressive of the transfer. But there was nothing of the kind. The Israelites had to help themselves to the land as best they might; and they did so by dislodging and exterminating, as far as they were able, the existing inhabitants. Their title, therefore, was one by conquest, not by gift. Nor was the title by conquest, supposing that to have proceeded from divine ordinance, secured free of the ingredient of failure attaching to mere human operations.

Operations outside the limits.

The occupation of the two and a half tribes outside the assigned limits was a violation of the terms of the grant, and there was another serious infraction in the interference of the Israelites with the excluded tribes of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, which, strange to say, is attributed to the direct causation of God. "The Lord," we are told, "strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel; and he gathered the children of Ammon and Amalek and went and smote Israel. So the children of Israel served Eglon, the king of Moab, eighteen years" (Jud. iii. 12-14). After this there was constant warfare with these tribes with varying success. Four hundred and fifty years later Moab is spoken of as having "rebelled against Israel." Saul, the first king of Israel, attacked them, as also Edom, accounting them all, not as allies, but enemies. He fought "against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and "vexed them" (1 Sam. xiv. 47). So also the next king, David, the model ruler. He "dedicated unto the Lord" the treasures of which he despoiled the nations "subdued" by him, among whom were Moab and Ammon. "And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord," it is added approvingly, "preserved David whither-

soever he went" (2 Sam. viii. 12-14). His hostility was carried to a bitter and cruel extreme. He went himself to Edom together with Joab "the captain of the host." "For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel until he had cut off every male in Edom" (1 Kings xi. 15, 16).

Non-possession within the limits.

Such was the aggression, domination, and occupation of territory, in violation of the divine instructions, and in excess of the right by grant. On the other hand, the failure to carry out what was ordained, and to lay hold of the possessions included in the divine grant, was equally remarkable.

The northern boundary, as has been seen, is not to be defined from the data given. Mount Hor not being known, the question is, how far up the coast of the Mediterranean northward the limits were to reach. In the maps Mount Carmel is the extreme point given on the coast, after which the boundary is made to trend inland, so as to exclude Tyre, and beyond it Sidon. But this, though in keeping with the actualities, is not consistent with the scripture requirements, which appear to include these dominions in the territories assigned to the Israelites. "Now Joshua," we are told, "was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. This is the land that yet remaineth." Various lands are mentioned, among which is "Mearah, that is beside the Sidonians;" and afterwards God is said to have declared, "All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon into Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel" (Josh. xiii. 1-6). Asher was the tribe located in this direction, and it is made a reproach to them that they had not ejected the Sidonians. "Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon. But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out" (Jud. i. 31, 32). Accho is on the coast to the south of Tyre, as Sidon is to the north. If Hermon is the mount referred to as Hor, then a line from the coast to that mount would pass just close to the town of Sidon.

The divine command respecting all these Canaanites was, "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them" (Deut. vii. 2). Very different, however, was the conduct of

the model king as respects Tyre, for he established friendly relations with Hiram, its ruler, and drew from him artificers and materials for the construction of his palace (2 Sam. v. 11). Solomon went to the length of entering into a compact with the Canaanitish sovereign, and this for the purpose of enabling him to build the temple. He paid for the labour supplied him in grain, wine, and oil, and furthermore bestowed upon Hiram "twenty cities in the land of Galilee" (1 Kings ix. 11; 2 Chron. ii. 3-10). Thus the command of God was set aside in order to advance the service of God, and one who, with his people, should have been exterminated according to the divine appointment, was endowed with a number of cities actually appertaining to the Lord's inheritance.

The western boundary was to be the Mediterranean, stretching from "the river of Egypt" to a line with Mount Hor. In the southern half of this line, along the coast, lay the land of the Philistines, who were never dispossessed. This was not from want of will, but of power. They were among those whom Joshua failed to eject (Josh. xiii. 3). Strange to say, God, who had appointed this land to the Israelites, not only failed to enable them to occupy it, but "he sold them into the hands of the Philistines" (Jud. x. 7); and they stood out against the Israelites, and held their own, throughout the whole period of their sacred history. We hear of them waging war with Israel in the times of Saul and David; they were occupying this territory as "the land of the Philistines" in the time of Elisha (2 Kings viii. 1, 3); and in the reign of Ahaz they invaded the possessions of the Israelites, and wrested from them various places, whereupon they themselves "dwelt there" (2 Chron. xxviii. 18). They were still a nation, and denounced amongst the enemies of the Israelites, as far onwards as the times of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. The latest of these prophets shows they were not only unejected but unsubdued in his day, saying, "I will cut off the pride of the Philistines" (Zech. ix. 6); and that is the last we hear of them. This prophet wrote B.C. 487, close upon a thousand years after the Israelites had crossed over Jordan, under Joshua, to take formal possession of the "inheritance" God had conferred upon them.

If it is singular that God should have bestowed Palestine

Inability to eject Canaanites.

on the descendants of Abraham as a special mark of his favour, and yet not have accompanied the gift with possession, but left them to install themselves by conquest, it is still more extraordinary that he should not have given them the ability to carry out his purposes by ejecting those whom they had to displace. The one were to come in as God's peculiar people, he reigning over them as their national ruler,—"they have not rejected thee," he is represented as saying to Samuel, when they sought to be under a human sovereign, "but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. viii. 7),—the other were to be visited as prominent sinners, when their iniquity had ripened to judgment (Gen. xv. 16). And yet, when the set time had arrived for fulfilling these designs, when the chosen people, disciplined in the wilderness, moved into the land to take up their inheritance, and "the iniquity of the Amorites" had become "full" for visitation, power was wanting to execute the divine will, even, as it is alleged, on the part of the divinity himself.

"As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out" (Josh. xv. 63). This, the very throne of God (Jer. iii. 17 ; xvii. 12), and the seat of his worship, could not be purged from the presence of the condemned idolaters. The Ephraimites did not clear their portion of the ancient occupants, nor did the children of Manasseh clear theirs (Josh. xvi. 10 ; xvii. 12, 13). This was in the time of the appointed leader Joshua. After he had passed away the Lord is represented as asking, "Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them ?" And he is made to give the answer himself. "Judah shall go up : behold, I have delivered the land into his hand." And after this we are told, "And the Lord was with Judah ; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron" (Jud. i. 1, 2, 19) ; so that the power of God sufficed in dealing with the hill tribes, but was unequal to cope with the better equipped inhabitants of the plains. Neither did Manasseh succeed in clearing his allotment, "but the Canaanites would dwell in that land." Neither did Ephraim, or Zebulon, or Asher, or Naphtali, or Dan, accomplish their tasks (Jud. i. 27-36). Two entire tribes,

Reuben and Gad, as we have seen, took up their portions outside the appointed inheritance. There remain ten tribes whose operations have to be considered. Of these, six are named in the chapter of Judges above cited as not able to dispossess those who were to be ejected ; and two other tribes, namely, Simeon and Dan, as we have seen, were held at bay as to their lots by the Philistines. Of the proceedings of Benjamin and Issachar we hear nothing, perhaps from the extreme insignificance of their lots. And the failure continued even to the prosperous reign of Solomon, who, four hundred and fifty years after the first occupation under Joshua, had still to put up with the presence of the condemned Gentiles. "And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond-service unto this day" (1 Kings ix. 20, 21), making, in fact, with them that species of "covenant," to the preservation of their lives, which God had prohibited.

Non-possession by Abraham.

The promise, or prophecy, as to their "inheritance," was thus far from being fulfilled in the instance of the descendants of Abraham. But it embraced the patriarch also himself. God, it is allowed, had "promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him," and yet, it is equally allowed, "he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts vii. 5).

Perpetuity of inheritance.

And this inheritance was to be held in perpetuity. "To thee will I give it," it was declared, "and to thy seed for ever." The patriarch, we see, never was more than a stranger and a pilgrim in the land (Heb. xi. 13). His descendants had partial possession only, in places totally excluded, in others obliged to put up with the joint occupation of the ancient owners. While so holding, it was no peaceable and undisturbed enjoyment, as might be expected from a gift divinely bestowed. They were in continual hostilities with every tribe and nation around them. All seemed greedy of the bone, endeavouring to snatch it from them. These contentions were frequently successful, the Israelites being brought repeatedly under hostile yoke, and sometimes even carried

away into captivity. And the end has been that they have been totally supplanted. They had about fifteen hundred years of this incomplete and disturbed possession, and for eighteen huudred their "inheritance" has passed away to strangers.

Statutes to endure for ever.

(4.) The statutes and ordinances enjoined on the Israelites were to endure for ever. The priest's office was to belong to Aaron and his descendants under a "perpetual statute" (Ex. xxix. 9), and the "priesthood" was to be "everlasting" (Num. xxv. 13). They were consecrated by anointment, and had observances in respect of vestments, washing the feet, and abstinence from wine, all of which were ordained to them by a statute "for ever" (Ex. xxviii. 43; xxx. 21; Lev. vii. 36; x. 9). The service of the Levites was also established "by a statute for ever" (Num. xviii. 23). The Passover, the Sabbaths, the Holy Convocation, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles, were to be kept up and observed "for ever" (Ex. xii. 14; xxxi. 16; Lev. xxiii. 21, 31, 41). The burnt offerings, the meat offerings, the yearly atonement, the first fruits, the free-will offerings, and all the sacrificial performances, were in like manner enjoined and regulated "by statute for ever" (Lev. iii. 17; vi. 22; xvi. 34; xvii. 7; xxiii. 14; Num. xv. 15; xix. 10). The perquisites of the priests, consisting of "the heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel," and the show bread, were secured to them "by reason of the anointing," "by an ordinance for ever" (Ex. xxix. 28; Lev. vi. 18; vii. 34; xxiv. 9; Num. xviii. 8, 19). And the sacred lamps were to be kept burning "for ever" (Ex. xxvii. 21; Lev. xxiv. 3). But this provision of perpetuity has been set at naught, and abrogated, under a new dispensation. The Jewish people have lost their "inheritance," and therewith all their distinctive usages have been abolished. The endurance "for ever" of the one has proved as unreal as that of the other. The first covenant has been accounted antiquated, worn out, and no more to be respected. It was as "that which decayeth and waxeth old" and is "ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 13). It was found composed of "weak and beggarly elements," all which were "to perish with the using" (Gal. iv. 9; Col. ii. 22). It depended on "carnal ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" (Heb. ix. 10). Had "that first covenant

been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (Heb. viii. 7); but being condemned, the "reformation" was made. Jesus Christ was introduced as "the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. viii. 6). What could be announced with more solemnity, or earnestness of assurance, than the special, distinctive, national promises made to the Jews? Nevertheless, in the face of the "reform," the whole have been declared unreal and void, and have been set aside absolutely. The priesthood of old, though of divine appointment, is under the new system declared to have been "after the law of a carnal commandment" (Heb. vii. 16). The priest is now taken "out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood;" and "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." The present priesthood, or that of Jesus, we are assured is to be an "unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. vii. 12-14, 24). The "law of commandments," contained in the past "ordinances," has also been "abolished" (Eph. ii. 15), and "the handwriting" of these "ordinances blotted out" (Col. ii. 14).

Perpetuity of throne of David.

(5.) Another special promise relates to the kingly rule. For this also perpetuity was pledged. "When thy days be fulfilled," was God's message to David through the prophet Nathan, "and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 12-16). "I have found David my servant," says the Psalmist; "with my holy oil have I anointed him.—I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit

their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me" (Ps. lxxxix. 20-36). "For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.—If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers" (Jer. xxxiii. 17-21).

This last utterance is by a prophet of the tribe of Levi, and he took care prominently to pronounce for the welfare of his class. But where are the Levites? Where is Israel? Where is the throne of the kingdom? And where even any descendant of the house of David? The sun and the moon endure, day and night succeed each other in uninterrupted rotation, but what has become of this sure and unchangeable covenant? Sins might be committed, but these were to be met with temporary chastisements. The seed were to be maintained upon the insubvertible throne, and the line of David were never to be unseated as had been that of Saul. But how stand the events? David's realm was transmitted to his successor Solomon, and held in its integrity through that reign, and that one reign only. Ten tribes out the twelve fell away from the next occupant of the throne and "rebelled against the house of David unto this day" (1 Kings xii. 19). The transmission, according to the promise, failed thus early. The potentate who was to be made "higher than the kings of the earth" was shorn of two-thirds of his already contracted and insignificant dominions. The exaltation never came, the throne has been vacant for ages, and if search were made for a lineal descendant of the stock assured, not one at this day could be met with.

The seventy years captivity.

(6.) The captivity in Babylon forms the subject of a precise prophecy. "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.—And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jer. xxv. 9-11). Jeremiah lived to the time of the captivity, and there is no assurance that he may not have written this passage after the event. If so, the only portion thereof that would be prophetic would be the term of the captivity which lay beyond his day. And it is quite possible that this clause may have been introduced by some other hand after the captivity was over. Even then accuracy was not secured, perhaps under the temptation to use a sacred number as expressive of the period. The captivity was effected on two several occasions. At the first, the king Jehoiachim was carried off, together with the treasures of the palace and the temple, and all the chief men and warriors to the number of ten thousand, and all the artificers. The kingdom was, however, still maintained, the throne being conferred upon the king's brother Zedekiah (2 Kings xxiv. 10-17). But he proved rebellious, and after he had reigned eleven years, Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and completed the captivity. He burnt all the habitations in the city, destroyed its walls, and carried away the king and the whole population, leaving but a miserable remnant "of the poor of the land to be vine dressers and husbandmen" (2 Kings xxv. 1-12). The first act in the captivity is stated to have occurred B.C. 599, and the last B.C. 588. The captivity ended with the proclamation of Cyrus, given as in B.C. 536. Dating the captivity from the first period, it lasted sixty-three years, and from the last, but fifty-two. In neither case was the prophetic term reached. Evidently the crowning act of the captivity is that which presents the event predicted. It is a thorough, not a partial desolation, that is spoken of. While Zedekiah was reigning in Jerusalem, the utter destruction described by the prophet had not taken place. And thus it is represented in the Book of Chronicles. What befel Zedekiah, his people, and his city, happened, it is declared, "to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). The prophetic period is thus in error by eighteen years.

The seventy weeks of Daniel.

(7). There is another precise period affecting the Jews prophesied of. "Seventy weeks," it is said, "are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." This period was to date "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Dan. ix. 24). The term rendered "weeks" is a period of seven, and the common acceptation is that this means seven years. The prophecy, therefore, would embrace 490 years. There are considerable diversities of opinion as to which of the edicts for the restoration of Jerusalem, its temple, and its walls, is that from which the period of the prophecy is to have its course; but taking the most favourable term, and the one generally accepted, the edict would be that issued by Arataxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. ii. 1), which is said to have been in B.C. 445. This brings us to A.D. 45 for the fulfilment of all expressed in the prophecy. In that year, then, the history of the Jews should have been wound up in blessing. It was a prophecy affecting both the "people" and their "holy city." Their period of trial was to be concluded, there was to be "an end" of their "sins," their "reconciliation" to God was to be perfected; the most Holy, whatever that may mean, was to be anointed, and the nation were to be regenerated, and accepted in "everlasting righteousness." But the events have been woefully at variance with the prophecy. The Jews, about this time, are considered to have steeped themselves in the guilt of compassing the death of their Messiah, and to have incurred the outpouring of the last dregs of God's wrath against the nation. There is no occurrence to distinguish the year in question, but in A.D. 70 the city of Jerusalem was demolished, and the Jews underwent that dispersion which has been maintained to the present day. They are yet in their sins, and the happy time of entire reconciliation spoken of by the prophet remains unrealised.

Dispersion and restoration of the Jews.

(8). The predicted dispersion and restoration of the Jews, coupled with their remaining a peculiar people, though scattered among all nations, are held to present standing tokens of the

reality of prophecy. But the supposition will not stand the test of examination. All the early prophecies of this description, and these embrace whatever there is that is specific in its nature connected with the subject, relate to the visitations culminating in the captivity in Babylon, and are given by writers conscious of this event. They saw thus far, but no further. They had no knowledge of the ultimate dispersion now prevailing. They mark the sin that led to the captivity, which was the sin of idolatry, and represent the people as held fast in this particular transgression throughout the period of their judgment. "When thou shalt beget children and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell" (Deut. iv. 25-28). "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.—The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.—And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone" (Deut. xxviii. 15, 36, 64). "Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; and they went and served other gods, and worshipped them,

gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book; and the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day" (Deut. xxix. 24-28). "But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it" (Deut. xxx. 17, 18). Jeremiah, who prophesied specifically of the captivity in Babylon, puts the matter on the same footing. "And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt show this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God? Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them:—therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither you nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night, where I will not show you favour" (Jer. xvi. 10-13). "And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them" (Jer. xxii. 8, 9). And there is the crowning enunciation in Jer. xxxii. 32-44. Then, again, idolatry is the cause of offence, and the "king of Babylon" the instrument of the judgment, after which comes a restoration to be perpetuated in the thorough conversion of the people and their never ending prosperity. "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their

children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." And so also Ezekiel (xxxvi. 17-28; xxxvii. 21-23), who was himself of the captivity. He declares that it was "for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it," that God had "scattered them among the heathen," and "dispersed" them "through the countries;" but that they should be restored, a converted people, in everlasting blessing. "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their chil-

dren's children, for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

These prophets, conscious of the idolatry, the captivity, and the dispersion, could put these circumstances together. Beyond this they knew no more; and, launching into futurity, involved themselves in predictions that have not been realised. The Jews, since the captivity, now for two thousand four hundred years, whatever their sins, have assuredly been free from that of the worship of idols. But their restoration has not been effected with the blessings spiritual and temporal promised them. They never regained their original standing in independent nationality, nor have their hearts, as we are assured, been turned to God. Instead of renovating them spiritually, God, we are told, "hath concluded them all in unbelief" (Rom. xi. 32). Nor has the prince representing David, with whom was to be established the "everlasting covenant," and who was to rule over them in peace for ever, made his appearence. Daniel, writing, as it may be judged, long after the termination of the captivity in the times of the Grecian rule, recast the subject by projecting a fresh prophecy, embracing the, to him, safe period of nearly five centuries, at the end of which was to come in the expected prince and the reign of righteousness; but this term has also ended in disappointment. And so we are brought to the view of the apostle, who, still holding out the banner of hope, calls upon us to praise God's wondrous ways in working out these happy delineations. "O the depth," he exclaims, "of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Rom. xi. 33). We may respond cordially to the sentiment, however little we may be able to subscribe to its application.

Failing thus the specific predictions of the Deuteronomist, and of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, we are cast, for the renovation of Israel, upon a vague and limitless futurity. The Jews are themselves conscious that every beacon of hope

hitherto presented to them as a people awaiting recognition, has proved unreal, and with not one promise uttered by their prophets, connected with their past history, fulfilled, the expectations maintained for them for the future are entitled to small consideration. The existing condition of the Jews, remaining a marked people, unabsorbed into the masses surrounding them, may be accounted for without a miracle. Their strong sense of nationality, their firmness in their religious persuasions, their distinctive usages, their intermarriages, and their seclusion from other races, and exclusion by them, are sufficient causes to have preserved them in their identity. The national peculiarities of members of the same empire remain distinct, without the repelling conditions belonging to the Jews. Witness the well marked characteristics of the English, Scotch, and Irish. Among the wandering and dispersed tribes the Gypsies present features quite as remarkable for non-absorption as do the Jews, and for as lengthened a space of time. The Parsees have no land of their own, and are scattered over the East, and yet continue a distinct people. And the negroes of Africa have been equally dispersed, and, nevertheless, have maintained their peculiarities wherever they have gone.

A destruction of Jerusalem remitted.

(9.) Micah prophesied a destruction of Jerusalem. "Zion," he said, shall "be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest" (iii. 12). But the calamity, we are told, was averted by repentance. Jeremiah recites the prophecy as that given out publicly by "Micah the Morasthite, to all the people of Judah," and adds, that Judah "besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them" (Jer. xxvi. 18, 19). The case is the same as in the instance of Jonah,—a divine commission given to an appointed prophet, and then falsified. Any one might prophecy on any subject on these terms.

Captivity of the ten tribes.

(10.) "Within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people" (Isa. vii. 8). By Ephraim is meant the schismatic ten tribes forming the kingdom of Israel as distinguished from Judah, their land becoming known as Samaria. This prediction is supposed to have been put forth in the year B.C. 742, but as Isaiah was not edited until after the return from the captivity in Babylon, no reliance can be

placed on the dates or integrity of the announcements appearing in his name. Still, taking the time ascribed as the right time, the event predicted came off, not in sixty-five years, but much sooner, namely in twenty-one. "In the ninth year of Hosea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria.—There was none left but the tribe of Judah only" (2 Kings xvii. 6, 18). This is stated to have been in B.C. 721.

The end of Jeroboam.

(11.) Amos, who prophesied in the days of Jeroboam, hazarded the prediction that this godless sovereign should "die by the sword" (vii. 11). But the fact turned out otherwise, and he ended his days naturally, sleeping "with his fathers" (2 Kings xiv. 29).

The fate of Josiah and Jehoiakim.

(12.) There are the like failures in respect of Josiah and his son Jehoiakim. Josiah, in compensation for his godly reforms, instituted on the discovery of the book of the law by Hilkiah, was assured of a peaceable end. "Behold therefore," he was told, "I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place" (2 Kings xxii. 20). But we learn, strangely enough a little further on in the same record, that "In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and King Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre" (2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30). The chronicler, perhaps to mend the matter, says he was carried alive into Jerusalem, and there died of his wounds (2 Chron. xxxv. 23, 24). Josiah's son was of a different stamp from his father, being as remarkable for his iniquities as the other was for his godliness. A fate corresponding with his deserts was accordingly marked out for him. "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah the king of Judah. They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah my sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." "Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, king of Judah; he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost" (Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30). So far the prophet. And thus the historian. "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead" (2 Kings xxiv. 6).

Judgment of foreign nations.

It is remarkable that while God is represented to have revealed himself as the one true God to the Jews only, taking them alone up as his people, and centring his worship among them in their "holy city," to the exclusion of all worship elsewhere, the Gentiles being abandoned without testimony or guidance to their idolatries, he should, nevertheless, according to the prophets, visit these Gentile nations with various judgments, as if absolute transgressors against his known will and commandments. One would have thought, that, if viewed as unfitted for instruction or recognition, they would equally have been ignored for special correction. The only exceptional instance is that of Jonah's alleged mission to Nineveh. Here there is said to have been a call to repentance made in the name of God, and which was at once responded to. But what was the nature of the repentance? Did the Ninevites abandon their idols and turn to the true God,—that God who was to be worshipped only in Jerusalem? The whole tale appears as apocryphal as its introductory feature of the whale. It is, moreover, remarkable that the nations denounced by the spirit of God through the mouths of these prophets, are precisely those, and those only, immediately surrounding the Jews, and known to them naturally in the flesh. Immense fields of populations, of a like order, steeped in idolatry, and given over to wicked courses, were spread about in outer and remoter circles; but the prophetic afflatus had no power to reach them. The divine cognisance and action are restricted to the limits of the knowledge of the human agents. Would it be unfair to conclude that the mission itself had no higher origin than the human sentiment? The examination of these prophecies in their details certainly leads to the same judgment.

I proceed to notice the most tangible of this class of prophecy.

Egypt.

(13.) "The Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. xix. 4). "So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners" (Isa. xx. 4). "The Lord

of hosts, the God of Israel," (no God to the Egyptians, be it observed,) "saith, Behold I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him: and I will deliver them into the hands of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon" (Jer. xlvi. 25, 26,; see also Ezek. xxix. 19). There is no security that the denunciations were not recorded after the events.

"No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.—Yet thus saith the Lord God: At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt" (Ezek. xxix. 11-13). This is sufficiently precise. The period is a round and sacred number. Unfortunately there is no record of the fulfilment.

"And they shall be—a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms" (Ezek. xxix. 14, 15). It became, and long continued, the centre of learning. It is now the seat of the most enlightened government existing among the oriental races, an important emporium of commerce, and the highway between Europe and Asia.

"And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. And they shall turn the rivers far away" (Isa. xix. 5, 6). "And I will make the rivers dry" (Ezek. xxx. 12). These predictions relate to invasions, first by the king of Assyria, and subsequently by the king of Babylon, but the desiccation foretold was never effectuated.

"In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt.—For they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.—In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall keep, saying, Blessed

be Egypt my people, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 19-25). This relates to the last times when Israel are to be restored, and being prophetic of the future, I should not have noticed the passage, but that in Joel the description of Egypt's position in these times is altogether different. "Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion" (Joel iii. 19-21). With Isaiah, Egypt is healed, accepted as of the people of God, and brought with Israel into common blessing. With Joel, Israel is cleansed, but Egypt treated as an adversary, and left to suffer judgment.

Edom.

(14). Egypt lies to the south of Judea. Following the geographical order, the next land which has attracted the notice of the prophets is Edom. In Joel, as above shown, the two countries are associated together in final judgment. In the present day they stand very differently circumstanced. While Egypt is flourishing, and making progress in prosperity, Edom is so desolate that the prophecy against her might be considered completed, but for further particulars of her fate appearing in other predictions. "Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it" (Jer. xlix. 17, 18). "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever" (Isa. xxxiv. 6-10). Edom should be repopulated to admit of the crowning slaughter here spoken of. After the long disconnection with the Jews, Edom, on the one side, nearly denuded of inhabitants, and the Jews, on the other, dispersed for ages among distant nations,

how this still pending slaughter is to be associated with a "controversy for Zion," it is hard to imagine. The conflagration spoken of is equally in the future, and as difficult to realize. It is that of a whole land, overspread with pitch and brimstone, blazing like Sodom and Gomorrah, and burning for ever.

Moab.

(15). We pass now to Moab. If it is a matter of surprise that God, while neglecting the Gentile nations for good, should visit them, nevertheless, for judgment, it is equally strange that he should inspire and commission a man of one of these outcast nations to utter prophetic communications in his name. Yet so it was. We have the prophecy of Balaam, the Moabite, concerning the chosen race and his own people. "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth" (Num. xxiv. 17). This was realized by king David, and points to a cruel butchery committed by him. "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants" (2 Sam. viii. 2). The record having been made up after the event, this cannot be accepted as a prophetic denunciation.

Isaiah gives us "The burden of Moab." He appears to have taken his materials from an older prophet, at the close of whose denunciations he says, "This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab since that time. But now," he adds, contrastedly, "the Lord hath spoken, saying, within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble" (Isa. xvi. 13, 14). The old prophecy had not taken effect, but now the judgment was to be carried out in three years. This is said to have been announced in B.C. 726. But, according to Jeremiah, who is considered to have written a century and a quarter later, in B.C. 600, the sentence remained still unexecuted in his time. "Moab," he says, "hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore

his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed" (Jer. xlviii. 11). And then we find him repeating the prophecy put forward by Isaiah, as if an independent utterance of his own, care, however, being taken not to adopt the awkward limit of three years, by which the earlier prophecy had gone wrong. I give the parallel passages which show the identity of these prophecies.

Plagiarisms of Jeremiah.

Isaiah.	Jeremiah.
xv. 2. On all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.	xlviii. 37. For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped.
3. In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth; on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.	38. There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof.
4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz.	34. From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz.
5. My heart shall cry out for Moab.	31. Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres.
5. His fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old:	34. From Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old.
5. For by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.	5. For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.
6. For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate.	34. For the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.
xvi. 6. We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his	29, 30. We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness and his pride, and the haughtiness of

wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

7. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl.

8, 9. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah:—for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.

10. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.

11. Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

12. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

his heart.—His lies shall not so effect it.

20. Howl and cry; tell ye in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled.

32. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage.

33. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine-presses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting.

36. Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres.

13. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh (their idol), as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.

Jeremiah is thus found to be another of those prophets whose writings are manifestly unreliable. Professing to derive his materials from independent inspiration, he is detected taking his flights on borrowed pinions. Nor does he acknowledge his obligations, but veils them by transpositions, alteration of language, and introduction of fresh matter. This is not a solitary instance of his appropriation of the thoughts of others. "Jeremiah," observes Dr Davidson, "has made copious use of prior prophecies;" in evidence of which he points to numerous passages, from which I select those where the correspondences are most evident. Compare l. 8 &c. with Isa. xlviii. 20; l. 28 and li. 48, 54 with Is. lxvi. 6; v. 6-9 with Hos. xiii. 7, 8; viii. 5 with Hos. xi. 7; ix. 12 with Hos. xiv. 9; xii. 4 with Hos. iv. 3; xiv. 10 with Hos. viii. 13 and ix. 9; xxxi. 20 with Hos. xi. 8; xxxi. 27 with Hos. ii. 23; xlix. 27 with Amos i. 4; xlix. 3 with Amos i. 15; xlvi. 6 with Amos ii. 14; xlviii. 24 with Amos i. 12 and ii. 2; xxv. 30 with Amos i. 2; xxxi. 35 with Amos iv. 13; xliv. 11 with Amos ix. 4, 8; x. 19, xiv. 17 and xxx. 12 with Nahum iii. 19; l. and li. with Nahum ii. 13, 14 and iii. 13, 17.[1]

Damascus.

(16). Damascus stands next in order. Of the judgment on this place but little is said. "The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap" (Is. xvii. 1). This professes to have been uttered two thousand six hundred years ago, but the sentence remains still unexecuted. Jerusalem and the Jews have passed away, but Damascus continues one of the most flourishing cities of the East.

Tyre.

(17). "The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.—Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.—The Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof.—Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness.—Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste" (Isa. xxiii. 1-14).

[1] Introduction to the Old Testament, III. 46, 241, 258, 265, 302.

It is difficult to fix these sayings with a precise meaning. It is to be gathered that Tyre was to be attacked, apparently by the Assyrians, that her strongholds were to be overthrown, her fleets destroyed, and her inhabitants driven to seek refuge elsewhere. Events of this character are scarcely of sufficient mark to afford means through which to trace the action of prophecy. But vague as are the prophet's statements, they are not supported by history. Isaiah lived in the days of the Assyrian empire, and could thus be personally cognizant of its operations. Tyre was besieged by Shalmaneser, but unsuccessfully. The Tyrian fleet scattered that of the enemy, and "the renown of all in Tyre was bruited abroad on account of these exploits."[1] There was thus no overthrow of the navy of Tyre, nor cause for the evacuation of the city by its inhabitants. These materials are drawn from Josephus.

—to be desolate seventy years.

After this Isaiah has something explicit. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.—And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isa. xxiii. 15-18).

It would seem that the prophet's meaning is that Tyre was to lie desolate for a term of seventy years; that after this her trade was to revive, but that the wealth she might then accumulate was reserved for others, favoured of God, to whom it was to be allotted. The period was a "round prophetic" one, for which there has been no fulfilment. Had the consequences of the first siege entailed a ruin enduring for seventy years, the city would not have been in circumstances to invite the second siege that occurred, about a hundred years later, by Nebuchadnezzar.[2]

Siege by Nebuchadnezzar.

The siege by Nebuchadnezzar occupied the pen of Ezekiel, who lived in those days. "Thus saith the Lord God," he declares, "they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and

[1] Dr R. Williams' Hebrew Prophets, 348.

[2] Idem, 349, 353.

make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.—For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.—He shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.—With the hoofs of his horses he shall tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise; and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses; and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God.—I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God.—Thy riches—shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.—They shall lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?—In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.—Thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas."

These denunciations appear in the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth chapters of Ezekiel, and their purport is plain. Nebuchadnezzar was to assault insular Tyre, and bring her to utter ruin. All within her was to be broken down and destroyed, and her wealth was to be plundered or cast out into the surrounding waters. The siege by Nebuchadnezzar, we learn from Josephus, endured thirteen years. But it did not end as foreseen by the prophet. The efforts of Nebuchadnezzar proved unavailing, and Tyre made a successful resistance. So far from being laid bare like a rock, and consigned to irremediable ruin, so that she should be built upon no more, and when looked for not found, she flourished after this for three hundred years, and then succumbed at a

third siege undertaken by Alexander the Great.[1] This lay far beyond the day of the prophet; and he, consequently, shows no knowledge of the event.

In a subsequent passage Nebuchadnezzar is represented not to have met with his reward in Tyre, and compensation is given him in Egypt. "And it came to pass," the prophet states, "in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled; yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour, wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xxix. 17-20). The prophet makes this declaration, as it would appear from the marginal dates, sixteen years after he had predicted that the spoil of Tyre should fall to Babylon. In the interval the event turned out otherwise. The writer, consequently, corrects his statement, and thus negatives, under his own hand, his title to be accepted as a prophet.

The amended representations suggest singular reflections. A pagan power, bent upon self-aggrandizement, and actuated by greed, attacks the territory of another such power, tempted by her seemingly insignificant resources for resistance and her great wealth accumulated in commerce. God has no relations with either of these nations, having shut himself up elsewhere with a peculiar people of his own. Yet he views the aggression as a piece of service to himself and meriting acknowledgement and recompense. Rapine is to be the medium of the reward; but this not having been secured in the direction intended, a third power, wholly unconnected with the expedition, is given up to be plundered in lieu. The same thought of the remuneration of such an aggressor, as coming under the appointment of God, appears to be presented by Isaiah, where, in a passage I have already cited, he speaks of the "merchandise" of Tyre being laid up as "holiness to the Lord," or devoted to his purposes, to be reserved "for them that dwell before the Lord." The editing of Isaiah being traceable as far onwards as the end of the captivity in Babylon, prophetic utterances made in his name might readily embrace the times of Nebuchadnezzar. In both cases, however, the prevision of these prophets proves erroneous. Tyre did not fall as predicted under the assaults of Nebuchadnezzar, nor was her wealth made over as plunder to his forces.

[1] Hebrew Prophets, 348, 349.

With Tyre the circuit is completed of the nations or tribes surrounding Judea on its frontiers. A wider range comprehends Assyria, Babylon, and Greece, beyond which the prophetic observations do not reach. With Greece I need not deal, as what is said of it appears only in Daniel, whose predictions, there is room to conclude, were written after the events.

Assyria.

(18.) Assyria. The downfall of the capital city Nineveh is proclaimed by Nahum. History does not supply us with the means of judging of the accuracy of his details, which, moreover, are not of a very pronounced character. Nahum describes himself as an Elkoshite. It is uncertain where Elkosh may have been. Some suppose in Galilee, others in Assyria. There is a tomb shown as that of the prophet at Mosul, near the site of Nineveh. Nahum writes as one on the spot, describing what was before his eyes, and the inference is that he was an exile in Assyria. Josephus places him a hundred and fifteen years before the fall of Nineveh. "If," says Dr Williams, from whom I am drawing my observations, "we concede this writer's good faith, we may doubt his accuracy." "The first impression left by a dispassionate perusal of our prophet is that of contemporaneousness, or subsequence, to the events which he narrates. The defenders are fallen, the assailants hasten to the wall, the siege-screen is set fast, the city is taken, her daughters moan as doves, her people refuse to rally, she becomes a pool of waters." "The allusion to Judah is an anticipation how she will receive the news from afar; the description of the scarlet Medes, and of the river-gates bursting, is by one who had seen with his eyes."[1]

—to be judged at restoration of Israel.

In the uncertainty who Nahum was, or when he lived, and in view also of the vagueness of his statements and the want of historic test, it is impossible to satisfy ourselves that his

[1] Hebrew Prophets, 431-435.

utterances were really prophetic. Other references complete the difficulty. "When the Lord," we are told, "hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. x. 12). "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.—Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces.—And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass;—as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep" (Mic. v. 2-8). Nahum himself writes in the same strain. "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off" (Nah. i. 15). In Isaiah the same passage appears with an amplification. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. lii. 7). The time is that of the still future redemption of Israel and the reign of the Messiah. The overthrow of Assyria was to be dependant thereon. The same representations pervade these several prophets, the one, doubtless, taking up his ideas from the other. On one occasion the thought is expressed in identity of language, and seen, therefore, to have been borrowed. But the march of time has placed them all in the wrong. Nearly two thousand five hundred years ago the Assyrian empire was put an end to, but where is the redemption of Israel? where the rule of her Messiah?

Babylon.

(19). Babylon. The domination passed from Nineveh to this city. The prophecies respecting Babylon and her territories are ample and precise, and it is commonly thought, and

taught, that they have been literally fulfilled. I gave the subject attention some twenty years ago, and from what I then wrote I derive my present materials.

First, as to the city and its site. "It shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein" (Jer. l. 39, 40). Mr Rich in his Memoir of Babylon, and Sir Robert Ker Porter in his Travels, have noted the existence of a town and five villages within the limits of ancient Babylon. The town is Hillah, and the villages are Anana, Jumjuma, Tajaca, Tahmasia, and another to the northward not named. The locality also contains date plantations and cultivated lands. Hillah and its neighbourhood are thus described. "It is meanly built, and its population between six and seven thousand. The gardens on both sides the river are very extensive, so that the town itself from a little distance appears embosomed in a wood of date trees. The air is salubrious, and the soil extremely fertile, producing great quantities of rice, dates, and grain of different kinds."[1] "Lying on a spot of the vast site of Babylon,—the town is pleasantly situated amidst gardens and groves of date trees. The great centre bazaar is well filled with merchandise. As far as the eye can reach from the town, both up and down the Euphrates, the banks appear to be thickly shaded with groves of date trees.—We came upon a good deal of cultivated ground, over which we took our course for more than a mile. Tahmasia stands in the bosom of an extensive wood of date trees. Vestiges of ruins are seen all along between this and the village of Anana.—We did not halt there (at Tahmasia), but passed on over two miles of cultivation and high grass, at which extremity a vast tract opened before us, covered with every minor vestige of former building."[2] "Hillah, next to Baghdad and Busrah, is the largest town in the Pachalic; well built mosques and extensive bazaars bespeak it opulence. The number of its inhabitants is estimated at twenty-five thousand. Fruit, grain, and other provisions, are cheap and plentiful at Hillah, and boats are constantly arriving from various parts. Those from the northern parts of the Jezerat are

[1] Rich's Memoir.

[2] Sir R. K. Porter's Travels.

usually laden with rice; those from Lemlun and Busrah with dates, fish, coffee, &c."[1]

The time that these travellers visited Babylon was between the years 1811 and 1830. I was there in 1835, and can confirm their observations.

"The word that the Lord spake" was not only "against Babylon," but included also "the land of the Chaldeans" (Jer. l. 1). "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth" (Jer. li. 43). "Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord.—I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord" (Isa. xiv. 21-23). There was to be an utter end made of the region doomed, with no opening allowed for its resuscitation. Dr Keith, who labours to show the fulfilment of these and other prophecies, gives abundant grounds for coming to a contrary conclusion in the present instance. Such, he says, was "the Chaldee's excellency," that it departed not on the first conquest, nor on the final extinction of its capital, but one metropolis of Assyria rose after another in the land of Chaldea, when Babylon had ceased to be "the glory of the kingdoms." He speaks of Seleucia, founded B.C. 293, and containing in the first century of the Christian era six hundred thousand inhabitants, and of Ctesiphon, to which the seat of empire was transferred by the Parthian kings, and which became great and powerful. Six centuries after the latest of the predictions, he tells us, Chaldea could also boast of other great cities, such as Artemita and Sitacene, besides many towns. When invaded by Julian, it was, as described by Gibbon, "a fruitful and pleasant country," and in the seventh century Chaldea was the scene of vast magnificence in the reign of Chosroes. His favourite residence was Artemita, or Destagered. "The adjacant pastures," says Gibbon, "were covered with flocks and herds; the paradise, or park, was replenished with pheasants, peacocks, ostriches, roebucks, and wild boars; and the noble game of lions and tigers was sometimes turned loose for the golden pleasures of the chase." In the sixth century the towns of Samarah, Horounieh, and Djasserik, formed, so to speak, one street of twenty-eight miles.[1] Baghdad, the new capital, situate about fifteen miles from Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and forty eight from Hillah, was long the imperial seat of the princely caliphs, and is still an important and wealthy city, the capital of a Turkish pachalic. It is surrounded by extensive date groves, gardens, and cultivation. There are villages in its vicinity, and two important towns further up the Tigris, Meshed Ali and Meshed Housein, sacred to the Sheahs. Whatever, therefore, the destruction of cities in the land of Chaldea, they have sprung up, in succession, and still represent a considerable region of population. "At Dewannea," says Wellsted, "the district of Hillah commences. The centre of the river is here occupied by small islands, several of which during the floods are completely inundated, but now expose verdant and cultivated fields of grain and vegetables, the banks on either hand are studied with villages, and small villas surrounded by gardens enliven the picture. These belong to opulent merchants from Hillah, who pass the hot months within them. The country in other respects presents a pleasing contrast to that which we quitted; the soft and graceful foliage of the willow now entwines its branches with the date-palms, or flings its shadows over the silent and tranquil waters of the river." The prospect evidently improved upon the traveller as he approached the site of the prophet-stricken Babylon.

Arabian not to pitch tent there.

"Neither," it is further predicted of this site, "shall the Arabian pitch tent there" (Isa. xiii. 20). I was struck, when in the midst of the ruins of Babylon, with indubitable marks of an Arab encampment among them, consisting in pillars of clay, hollowed out at the top, and arranged as mangers for their horses; a provision not made except when the camp is to be stationary for a time. The Arabs range over the whole region, and naturally make use of the site of the ancient city as of any other unoccupied spaces. I am supported in my observation by Sir Robert Ker Porter. After passing Mujalibè, a ruin at the northern limit, he says, "Our road bent from the immediate bank of the river to the south-east; and after crossing the bed of a very wide canal, almost close to the bank we were leaving, we entered on an open tract, on which I saw the ex-

[1] Wellsted's Travels, by Ormsby.

[1] Keith on Prophecy, 273-330; 23d edition.

tensive encampment of Kiahya Beg. The town of Hillah lay a couple of miles beyond it. It was principally made up of bodies of men collected from distant tribes" (of Arabs obviously). He goes on to say, "We then bent our steps to the lines of an old Arab Sheikh called Mahmoud Bassani, who with his tribe had adhered—to the pashalick of Baghdad. As soon as we arrived in sight of his camp we were met by crowds of its inhabitants." The position of this encampment, within two miles of Hillah, must have been four miles within the boundary of the ancient city, the extent of which, according to Herodotus, was a square of twelve miles on each side, Hillah being exactly half way, measuring from east to west.

None to pass thereby.

Another declaration as to the site of Babylon is, "Neither doth any son of man pass thereby" (Jer. li. 43). So far from this being the case, it is a regular and well-trodden thoroughfare. Besides the intercourse of the natives and the conduct of their traffic, both by water and land, numerous well-known travellers have visited and passed through this region, among whom I may mention Niebuhr, Thevanot, Dalla Valle, Abulfedi, Captain Frederick, Major Keppel, Colonel Kinneir, Mr Buckingham, and Captain Mignan, besides Rich, Porter, and Ormsby, whose observations I have already cited. "Between Baghdad and Hillah," observes Mr Rich, "at convenient distances khans or caravanserais are erected for the accommodation of travellers, and to each of them is attached a small village of Fellahs." The Sheikh of the Zobeide Arabs "is responsible for the security of the road."

No stone thereof to be used.

Another prediction is, "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations" (Jer. li. 26). "They had brick," it is observed, "for stone" (Gen. xi. 3). This prophecy has equally failed of effect. "I had seen," states Sir R. K. Porter, "many of the Babylonian bricks at Hillah forming the court and walls of the house I inhabited; and which had been brought from the mounds of the ancient great city to assist in erecting the modern miserable town. In the more modern structures of Baghdad, Hillah, and other places erected out of her spoils, these inscribed bricks are seen facing outwards in all directions.—From her fallen towers have arisen, not only all the present cities in her vicinity, but others, which like herself are long ago gone down into the dust. Since the days of Alexander, we find four capitals at least built out of her

remains. Seleucia by the Greeks, Ctesiphon by the Parthians, At Maidan by the Persians, and Kufa by the Caliphs, with towns, villages, and caravanserais without number. Scarce a day passed without my seeing people digging the mounds of Babylon for bricks, which they carried to the verge of the Euphrates, and thence conveyed in boats to wherever they might be wanted." So also Mr Rich. "The walls (of Hillah) are of mud, and present a truly contemptible appearance; but the present Pasha of Baghdad has ordered a new wall to be constructed of the finest Babylonian bricks.—The bricks (of the ruin called Al Kasr) are of the finest description, and notwithstanding this is the grand store-house of them, and that the greatest supplies have been and are now constantly drawn from it, they appear to be abundant."

Destruction to be sudden.

The destruction of Babylon was to be effected by one sudden and final blow. "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Jer. li. 63, 64). "These two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection.—Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly" (Isa. xlvii. 9, 11). "Cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.—Thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee, and the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up" (Jer. l. 26, 31, 32). "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.—O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness" (Jer. li. 8, 9, 13). Dr Keith, while endeavouring to show the completion of the prophecy, gives abundant proofs that the end of Babylon was not effected in the manner predicted. "A succession of ages," he says, "brought it gradually to the dust; and the gradation of its fall is marked till it sunk at last into utter desolation.—It fell before every hand that was raised against it. Yet its greatness did not depart, nor was its glory obscured

in a day. Cyrus was not its destroyer; but he sought by wise institutions to perpetuate its pre-eminence among the nations. He left it to his successor in all its strength and magnificence. Rebelling against Darius, the Babylonians made preparations for a siege, and bade defiance to the whole power of the Persian empire.—In the twentieth month of the siege (through a ruse) was Babylon a second time taken.—Babylon was a third time taken by Alexander the Great, and—afterwards successively by Antigonus, by Demetrius, by Antiochus the Great, and by the Parthians.—Each step in the progress of the decline of Babylon was the accomplishment of a prophecy.—Babylon was soon resorted to again, but the vicinity of the city of Seleucia, built on very purpose, tended greatly to its abandonment and decay, and was the chief cause of the decline of Babylon as a city, and drained it of a great part of its population.—The progressive and predicted decline of Babylon the great, till it ceased to be a city, has already been briefly detailed. About the beginning of the Christian era a small portion of it was inhabited, and the far greater part was cultivated. It diminished as Seleucia increased, and the latter became the greater city. In the second century nothing but the walls remained. It became gradually a great desert."[1] Babylon thus did not sink once and for ever like a stone thrown into deep waters. She was subjected to seven successive conquests, and survived them all, and was made desolate, not by a sudden catastrophe, but by the gradual migration of her inhabitants to the new capital. Seven centuries after her first fall her walls were in existence, and at this moment villages, and a commercial town, with their attendant groves, gardens, and cultivation, are on her site.

—to be by fire.

The predicted instrument of her destruction was fire. "The most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him" (Jer. l. 32). "I will make thee a burnt mountain.—The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her gates shall be burnt with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire (to extinguish it), and they shall be weary" (Jer. li. 25, 58). "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency,

[1] Keith on Prophecy, 272-332.

shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isa. xiii. 19). Such, however, was not the manner of her end. She sank by no particular act of judgment, but was wasted, as we have seen, by wars and the migration of her inhabitants.

Rome, Pagan and Popish.

(20). Rome. It is a prevailing idea among the Protestant section of Christians that Rome, Pagan and Popish, forms a subject of prophecy, and the adaptation they make of current events in history to the descriptions in the prophetic records, satisfies them that here, as in the history of the Jewish nation, standing proofs of the realisation of prophecy are before their eyes. It is certainly a remarkable circumstance, if Rome is thus the theme of prophecy, that nowhere is the name of this power put forward as the object in view in the utterances made. We have Egypt, Edom, Damascus, Tyre, Assyria, Babylon, all denounced by name, but the prophets are unable to deal with equal openness with Rome. Daniel and the Apocalypse are the works which are supposed to treat of Rome. The power of Rome was not dominant in the age of Daniel, and his vision is exercised in a very different manner, according as he deals with events that had already come to pass when he wrote, or those which lay beyond him in futurity. In the one case his details are precise, and the objects plainly indicated; in the other all is obscure and mysterious, and the application to be made quite uncertain. The position is otherwise as respects the Apocalypse. The Roman power was prevailing when that work was put forth, and had the writer intended the state, or heresies, of Rome, to be understood as the subject of his delineations, he might have said so distinctly, as when Tyre, Babylon, &c., were in question with the earlier prophets. But the object of his denunciations does receive from him a name, and that name is Babylon. The author is a plagiarist. He takes the materials of his prophecy, involving an extensive amplitude of details, from prior writers, and associates therewith the name employed by them; and it is by a strange liberty with the written word, with a violent misuse of the borrowed materials, that the subject he had in view is alleged to be Rome, not Babylon. Isaiah and Micah couple the downfall of Assyria with the restitution of Israel. The empire passed from Nineveh to Babylon, and Isaiah indifferently styles the ruler,

whose judgment is at this time to be meted out, the "king of Assyria" (x. 12), and the "king of Babylon." "And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" (xiv. 3, 4). This was the expected climax, and the author of the Apocalypse, falling into the vein of those who wrote before him, has evidently possessed himself with the same idea.

The visions of four kingdoms in Daniel.

To turn now to the prophecy in Daniel. This writer, under two separate visions, brings before us four ruling powers, whose dominion is to be put an end to at the time of the great consummation spoken of by Isaiah and Micah, and it is apparent that he is describing the same catastrophe, with the same agency, which is the subject of their vaticinations. The first vision represents a great image, in four parts, composed of gold, silver, brass, and iron mixed with clay; the other, four great beasts of diverse forms. The image is broken to pieces by a stone "cut out without hands," and the last of the beasts is destroyed at the time that "one like the Son of man" assumes the empire over the whole earth. The first vision indicates union and consolidation of power. There is the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs of iron, with feet of iron and clay. The one part is necessary to the other to constitute and form the whole image, and this image is in its entirety, when the stone cut out without hands falls upon its feet, or the last of its portions, and crushes the whole into fragments. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." The second vision represents individuality, each beast being perfect and entire in its particular form.

The nature of the individuality described in the second vision is revealed. "These great beasts," it was explained to Daniel, "which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." The individuality of the Son of man, who supplants them, is also apparent. In the other vision there is the like feature of individuality, with, however, the characteristic of combination. And here also we have an interpretation.

"Thou," Nebuchadnezzar, the then king of Babylon was told, "art this head of gold." The two visions being identical in their purport, and one member of the image being an individual king, it follows that the other three portions of the image represent the three remaining kings of the second vision. The stone which "smote the image" and "became a great mountain" that "filled the whole earth," is of course that "Son of man" who overthrows the dominion of the beasts, and establishes his universal empire, and is the fifth individuality.

It has now to be considered who were these several personages whom the prophet had in view. The first member is made known to us by revelation. This is Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. The incorporation of the four kings in one great image is a figure which would be realised by ascribing to them the same seat of empire, to the dominions of which each makes his contribution. The seat of empire in common to them would be that possessed by Nebuchadnezzar, namely Babylon. Cyrus and Alexander the Great would in this way fulfil the second and third parts. Daniel's book professes to have been a production of the time of Nebuchadnezzar, but it bears internal marks of being of the period of the Greek empire. Thus Cyrus and Alexander had flourished when he wrote, and could be correctly shadowed forth in the recorded visions. They severally made Babylon their capital, and there died when in the zenith of their power; and each added in territories, beyond those possessed by Nebuchadnezzar, to swell the dominions of the common centre. The fifth individual pointed to was evidently the Jewish, or the triumphant Messiah; and the fourth, whose power is subverted by him, should, like the three prior members of these visions, be some individual king ruling in Babylon. And here, evidently, we have that "king of Assyria," or "king of Babylon," spoken of by Isaiah and Micah as to be overthrown in the last days. The visions would thus indicate Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, the Antichrist, and the Christ, as their component members. The first three were known of to the prophet, the last two embody his conceptions for the futurity. Rome, as a dominant power, had not then been developed, and Rome, consequently, finds no place in his delineations.

The Apocalypse is in the same vein. The great beasts of

Daniel which "came up from the sea," three of them, (those known to the writer,) bearing the forms of a lion, a bear, and a leopard, and the fourth, (unknown to him,) described in vague terms, without special form, as "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly," and possessing ten horns, are matched by the apocalyptic beast, representing the last of the four. He, in like manner, is seen to "rise up out of the sea," embodied as a leopard, a bear, and a lion, in combination together, and armed also with ten horns. This beast is destroyed by the "Lamb," "the Lord of lords, and King of kings;" wherein, again, we have the last conflict between the Antichrist and Christ. The city Babylon at this time also falls under judgment.

Now to apply these prophecies to Rome, Pagan and Popish, it is necessary thereto that Rome should fill the scene from the cessation of the Grecian rule to the last days. But has this been so? Has not Rome long been the weakest of the existing states? Has not the Papal sovereignty been a mockery even to all over whom it has pretended to hold sway? And has not the sceptre, in these very days, weak and unreal as was the power attaching thereto, been taken, without a struggle, out of the feeble hands that held it?

Rome not the subject of prophecy.

The assertion that Rome fulfils the prophecy, will, in fact, in no respect stand examination.

(1). There is no connection between Rome and Babylon, as is necessary to bring her into combination with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, as a constituent of the great image, of which he was the revealed head. What is there in common between a throne in Babylon, and a senate, a throne, or a priestly convocation in Rome?

(2). Four members of the visions, namely the first three and the triumphant fifth, are individuals. Can the remaining one be properly represented by dynasties or chains of rulers,—consuls, tribunes, triumvirs, emperors, and popes, holding power at one time in a republic, at another in an oligarchy, a monarchy, or a hierarchy?

(3). In the last days it is "the Assyrian," "the king of Babylon," found dominant, who is destroyed at the coming of the Messiah, and it is his capital, "Babylon," that at the same time is brought under judgment. This is not Rome; nor are

we at liberty to introduce a double action, in two different directions, so as to include Rome in this special judgment.

(4). Daniel has a vision of a contest between a ram and a he-goat, which are said to represent the kings of Media and Persia on the one side, and "the king of Grecia" on the other. The empire of the latter is broken up into four parts, and "out of one of them came forth a little horn," which "waxed great, even to the host of heaven." This means, we are told, that "in the latter time of their kingdom," that is of the divided empire of "the king of Grecia," "when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance" shall appear, who "shall stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Here, again, we appear to have the Antichrist, as overthrown, in the last days, "when the transgressors are come to the full," by the "Lamb," the "Lord of lords, and King of kings." But out of any fragment of the empire of Alexander, the Roman state cannot be derived. "The Assyrian" would be so.

(5). The fourth beast of Daniel, represented to be "dreadful and terrible," is said to "devour," and "break in pieces," and "stamp" down all other powers. Such was not the manner of the Roman empire, whose policy was to protect, build up, consolidate, and incorporate with herself, the territories and peoples she made her own by conquest. Nor is this feature of destructiveness a characteristic of the Popish state, the hierarch seeking to cherish and gather in to his fold all those whom he can control or influence. If the head of this state has the will to persecute, the power to do so has long ago passed away from him. Nor would such persecution as the Popes have been capable of, amount to the wide spread, indiscriminate, savage destructiveness, descriptive of the beast.

(6). The apocalyptic beast is seen to "rise up out of the sea" as one of the objects revealed to the writer among the "things" which were to be "hereafter." But Rome, when this work was written, was in the plenitude of her power, her uprising being a thing of the past, and thus not what he could have been describing as still future to him.

(7). The fourth, or apocalyptic beast, is found in the exercise of his terrific powers at the coming of the Messiah, and by him is overthrown, but the Roman state was disposed of by

invasion of barbarous races more than thirteen centuries ago, and the Romish hierarch, long enfeebled, has now been deprived of the very semblance of power.

(8). Rome, however, is supposed to be represented by ten inferior states springing out of the ruins of her empire. This does not correspond with the description of the beast. His horns are a part of himself, existing as types of power while he is in his entirety, and not representing fragments taken from him on his empire being broken up. Nor are the interpreters able to point to exactly ten such fragments as composing the Roman state before her demolition. They vary in their specifications, naming, among them, Ostragoths, Visigoths, Sueves, Alans, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, Heruli and Turingi, Saxons, Britons, Huns, Lombards, Alemanes, Greeks; fourteen divisions, not merely ten. Nor did this distribution endure. Among the Germans, Italians, and Swiss, a multiplicity of petty states sprang up, which raised the number of the horns at one time to from sixty to seventy. And in accounting for the Roman domains, the interpreters overlook the possessions held by this power in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Media, and Armenia.

(9). Confining our view to papal Rome, as representing the power of the Antichrist which is to be overthrown at the coming of the Messiah, the individuality of the Antichrist is forfeited, and a system is made to stand for a man. Nor does this system comprehend all that belongs to the antichristian body. The Greek church is as far removed from the Protestant sense of orthodoxy as the church of Rome, and the Mahometan faith is even more marked than either of these with the direct hostility to Christ, as revealed in the scripture, which characterizes the Antichrist.

The ultimate result is that in no way can it be shown that these predictions in Daniel and the Apocalypse are true prophetic utterances susceptible of proof of fulfilment. The writers, evidently, looked for a speedy enactment of the catastrophe that was to conclude all earthly interests in the advent of the Messiah, and shaped their agents out of the materials surrounding them. They had no foreknowledge of the long chain of events, with the uprise and downfall of a multiplicity of independent states, which were to occupy the field of their

vaticinations, for successive ages, between the times in which they stood, and the still unenacted end. They therefore travelled not, as modern experience would require, to Rome and onwards, but the early writers kept round that centre of power of which they knew, namely Babylon, and the author of the Apocalypse, treading in their steps, advanced no further. Rome, consequently, has had no place in prophecy.

The Messianic prophecies.

We pass now to the range of prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah and his operations. The Christians allege that they have been fulfilled in the person of Jesus. The Jews reject this belief, and say that their Messiah has yet to come. The Christians represent the Messiah in two aspects, and with two advents, the one as serving and suffering, the other as ruling and glorious. The Jews have not made the discovery of a two-fold description of the expected one in the prophecies. They know of him only as a coming deliverer and triumphant king. There is thus, viewed from every side, a measure of prophecy connected with the Messiah supposed to remain still unfulfilled. The Christians, however, greatly differ among themselves as to the scope of the expected fulfilment. One party look for an actual reign of the Messiah on earth, coupled with the restoration of the Jewish nation. This falls in with the Jewish anticipations. The other confine their hopes to spiritual and heavenly blessing, in association, in some way, with their Redeemer. In this latter creed the field for the offices of a triumphant Messiah is not apparent. When the dispensations are wound up, and God becomes "all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28), what scope is there for other intervention? what more can be required?

The prophecies we have now to deal with regard the Messiah in his suffering aspect, and which the Christians maintain have received their accomplishment in the life of Jesus.

Messiah announced by Moses.

The advent of the Messiah is associated with promises made to Abraham and to David, and the whole body of the scripture is appealed to as proclaiming the event. At the birth of John, his father Zacharias, being "filled with the Holy Ghost," "prophesied" of Jesus, of whom John was to be the forerunner, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by

the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke i. 67-75). "Search the scriptures," said Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.—Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John v. 39, 46). He spoke in the same strain to two of the disciples whom he met with after his resurrection at Emmaus. "O fools," he said, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke xxiv. 25-27). And afterwards, appearing to the apostles, he said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 44, 45). And so Paul declared that he had said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts xxvi. 22, 23).

Before passing to the detailed prophecies, there are a few observations to be made on the general declarations above cited. The Messiah spoken of by Zacharias, in the power of the Holy Ghost, was clearly the temporal and triumphant ruler expected by the Jews, and not the suffering Messiah, as represented in Jesus, who was the actual subject of his "prophesying." He "blessed the Lord," as the "God of Israel," then visiting "his people," the object of the visitation being to set up the "horn" of David, for their deliverance "from the hand of all who hated them," in order that they might "serve him without fear," in righteousness, "all the days of their lives." It

was for earthly and national benefits that he looked through the then coming Messiah, and such he declared to be the scope and field of his mission as prophetically announced from the foundation of the world. But this rôle was not fulfilled by Jesus. He effected nothing for the Jews as a nation. Instead of being delivered from their enemies, their enemies prevailed against them; and instead of serving God in holiness and righteousness, they stand disavowed and rejected.

The appeal to the scriptures, made by Jesus himself during his lifetime, was to their unfolding him as the source of eternal life. The common complaint is that the dispensation by Moses concerned this life alone, without indication of a life to come. The promises and the punishments, in the record attributed to him, all relate to temporal circumstances, and but for aspirations of a higher order appearing in the psalms and writings of the prophets, raised after the times of Moses, and independently of anything put forward by him, we might have concluded that the Jews were ungoverned by any expectations connected with a future state. How Moses, therefore, is to be looked upon as having testified of the Messiah as the source of eternal life, is not apparent. It is declared that after his resurrection, Jesus, on more occasions than one, expounded all that had been said of himself throughout the scriptures, "beginning at Moses;" but not a word of these his expositions has been handed down for our edification. He appears to attribute to Moses a foreknowledge and revelation of his sufferings, and Paul apparently makes the same allegation, but not a trace of such knowledge is to be found in the writings ascribed to Moses.

Bruising seed of serpent.

(21). In passing sentence upon the serpent in the garden of Eden, God is said to have declared, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. iii. 15). This is a passage commonly held to point to Jesus as the redeemer of mankind, and if he has been proclaimed ever "since the world began," here only can we look for him in those the earliest days. But to associate him with this passage, various liberties have to be taken with the text. The serpent is no longer merely the terrestrial reptile, but represents the arch-enemy Satan, and what is put forward as a

mere judgment on a transgressor, becomes so altered in its purport and bearing as to embrace and convey inexpressibly great and enduring blessing for one of the guilty parties, namely the human culprits. And even then the passage and the facts cannot be made to agree. The devil is stated to have been "a murderer from the beginning," and in his relations to mankind is known only as Satan, or the adversary. But according to the text now in question, after being brought on the scene in Eden, God takes him and man up, and says that he will put enmity between them, as if hitherto no such hostile feeling prevailed on the part of either of them. This is an operation on the part of the Creator assuredly not pleasant to contemplate. And when the two are thus set against each other, they are to do each other mischief, each in his way. The one is to be attacked on the "head," and the other on the "heel." The application, especially confining it to the instance of Jesus, is full of difficulty. The head being a vital region, were it to be crushed, death or destruction might be indicated, and thus the absolute overthrow of Satan by Jesus become prognosticated. But the head in question is only to be "bruised," which certainly does not necessarily involve these results. And how is the bruising of the heel of Jesus to be explained? His life, such as he exhibited it, was absolutely taken, and the result, in his instance, was consequently greater than what was predicted. And it is a question between whom the conflict was to be. If between Jesus and Satan, then it is between the seed of the woman and the serpent himself; whereas, according to the text, the seed of the one was to engage the seed of the other. Taking the passage literally, the human race were to be in hostility towards the serpent race. Taking it figuratively, Jesus was to bruise, not Satan himself, but his offspring. After tampering with the language of the passage, it is only by generalizing, and avoiding all close application of its particulars, that people persuade themselves that it is a prefiguration of Jesus acting in the capacity of the redeemer of mankind.

A prophet like unto Moses.

(22.) "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.—Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and

those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold these days.—Unto you first, God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you" (Acts iii. 22-26). The passage so applied to Jesus is as follows. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." After this follows the rule for deciding between a true and a false prophet (Deut. xviii. 15-22). Whoever this successor to Moses may have been, it is clear that Jesus, taking him as described, was not the person. The passage relates to the time "when" the Israelites had "come into the land" given them of God, and the object immediately in view was to keep them clear of resort to any "charmer, or consulter with familiar spirits, or wizard, or necromancer," such as the nations they were to come among dealt with (ver. 9-14). To point beyond Moses to Jesus, was to leave them without the needed guidance for fifteen hundred years. The successor to Moses was to be a mere man like himself, one raised "from the midst of them," "of their brethren;" but Jesus is stated to have been born of divine parentage, to have been sent from heaven, and in fact to have been a divinity himself. Nor did his career in any way resemble that of Moses. He was no accepted leader of the people, but without station among them, or power. The passage evidently refers to ordinary prophets,—to one of a class; whereas Jesus stood alone, his office of prophet being lost in the superior attributes of a saviour.

(23.) "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance

The seed of Abraham.

of his mercy ; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.—That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant ; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." (Luke i. 54, 55, 71-75). "Your father Abraham," declares Jesus, "rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it, and was glad." (John viii. 56). "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." (Gal. iii. 8). "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16). Here are bold limitations of the promises to Abraham, making them to centre in the person of Jesus. With what justice will be seen by citing the promises themselves.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram,—I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 2, 3). "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen. xii. 7). "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." (Gen. xiii. 15, 16). "This shall not be thine heir, (referring evidently to Eliezer his steward,) but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them : and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen. xv. 4, 5). "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God." And then follows the institution of circumcision to mark and designate the seed. (Gen. xvii. 6-14).

The prophecy of Zacharias, with which this section opens, relates altogether to the nation and their temporal welfare. The "promise to the fathers," the "holy covenant," and the "oath sworn to Abraham," involved, in his idea, no more. The texts I have cited from Genesis fully support this view. The coming Messiah, Jesus, was to be the instrument for carrying out these promises. He was to free the nation from the oppression of their enemies, and enable them to "serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their lives ;" and the blessing assured to them was to flow onwards through them to the Gentiles. But no such fulfilment ensued. Jesus passed away, himself disposed of as a common criminal by those very enemies he was to have put down. The nation remained under subjection, and as wanting as ever in the holiness and righteousness that was to characterise them. No blessing has, of course, come through them to other nations. Thereupon the apostolic commentator steps in with an entirely new version of the promises. They relate no more to the Jews as a nation, nor to earthly prosperity. The seed is Jesus, and none other. The blessings are of a spiritual order, assured to all, indiscriminately, who believe in him. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29). The Gentiles are not recipients of blessing through the intermediate channel of the Jews. They come in with entire independence of the natural seed. That seed, in common with all flesh, "profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63). All centres in Jesus, and whoever lays hold of him, whether Jew or Gentile, is brought equally within the "covenant." And the realization of the promises depends upon futurity and the unrevealed world. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). The process is just this. The things spoken of are not the things meant, the persons indicated are not those designed, and when multitudes are in question, a single unit is intended. That seed, coming, as it

is said with curious phraseology, "out of the bowels" of Abraham, and stamped with the visible token of the "covenant" made with him "in the flesh" (Gen. xvii. 13), relates not to a carnal but a spiritual progeny, and while described to be countless as "the dust of the earth," or "the stars of heaven," proves to be a solitary individual. He is God-born, and therefore in no sense of the seed of Abraham. And, more than this, strange to say, the relative positions are transposed, and this alleged "seed" becomes, in fact, the progenitor of the stock from which it is sought to derive him. If Abraham obtains admission into the family of God, he is brought in, as any other, through Jesus. The gospel, "which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. xvi. 25), was, as we have seen, nevertheless "preached" to him, and he "saw the day of Jesus," in anticipation, and "rejoiced" in it. The temporal promises made to him signify the spiritual promises made to us, of which he, and others like him, are joint recipients with ourselves, "God having provided" that these, who have "received" no other "promise," "without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 39, 40). That "seed," which constitutes the heritage "according to the promise," is such only "if Christ's," a condition as imperative in the case of Abraham as of ourselves. "Before Abraham was," Jesus asserted in the sense that the whole foundation was raised upon himself, "I am" (John viii. 58). The confusion therefore is complete. Abraham is the seed of him who is said to be his seed. One thing becomes, in this manner, another thing, and the certainty of language is at an end. But in either way, whether the promises to Abraham relate to a seed carnal or a seed spiritual, to things of earth or things of heaven, no fulfilment can be claimed. The Jews remain undelivered and unblessed, and the inheritance of the Christians, as such, has yet to be realized.

The throne of David.

(24.) "Fear not Mary," said the angel to her, "for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever" (Luke i. 30-33). The wise men from the east, star-guided, came inquiring, "Where is he that is born

King of the Jews?" Herod, made anxious by his advent, asked where he was to be born, and the answer was, "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." (Matt. ii. 1-6). Nathanael accordingly so recognised him, saying, acceptably, "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John i. 49). Jesus passed away without assuming the throne, and it was then represented that the prediction was made good in his resurrection. "David—being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts ii. 30, 31). "Of this man's seed," namely of David's, "hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.—And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David" (Acts xiii. 23, 32-34.) How such an act can be called a fulfilment is not apparent. He that was to be the Son of David, "the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh," was made so by becoming the Son of God in resurrection life; and he who was to fill the earthly throne, does so by being translated to heaven. It requires a strong power of accommodation, beyond what I possess, to bring the prediction and the alleged event into accord.

To pass to the prophecy itself. "I will set up," David is assured in a passage I have already cited, "thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away

from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee, and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 12-16.) The time for this assured and insubvertible dominion is that of the final restoration of Israel. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.—In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people.—And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.—And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off" (Isa. xi. 1, 10-13). "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. lii. 7). "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel.—And David my servant shall be king over them;—and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt:—and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.—I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezek. xxxvii. 21-28). "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come unto our land; and when he shall tread in our palaces.—And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the

land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.—And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard" (Mic. v. 2-15). "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.—Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. ii. 1-12). "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.—And in this place will I give peace" (Hag. ii. 7-9). "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.—I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish" (Ps. cxxxii. 11-18).

Descent from David.

In the gospels Jesus is presented to us as this promised descendant from David. He was announced as such by the angel to Mary his mother; he was addressed as such by persons seeking help from him in their infirmities; and was thus

accepted by the populace (Matt. xii. 23) ; and so proclaimed on his public entry into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 9). And Paul so describes him, distinguishing between his natural birth and whatever was to be attributed to him in his resurrection life, saying, "Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 3, 4).

The attempt to connect Jesus with David is made through the channel of Joseph. In the mention of Mary's marriage to him, Joseph is carefully pointed out to be "of the house of David" (Luke i. 27), and when an angel appears to him in a dream to explain to him how his virgin wife proved to be with child, he is addressed as "Joseph, thou son of David" (Matt. i. 20) ; added to which there are two genealogies given tracing him in a direct line to David. But when we turn to the fact of the origin of Jesus, this feature disappears. He is distinctly declared to have been begotten by the Holy Ghost, Joseph having no part in him ; and when the matter is discussed by Jesus himself, he obviously points to his superior or divine parentage. He puts it to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ ? whose son is he ? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool ? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son ?" (Matt. xxii. 42-45). His only human link was Mary. Her tribe is not mentioned, but being the cousin of Elizabeth, who was the wife of a priest and herself of Aaronic descent (Luke i. 5, 36), she must have been of Levi. The parentage, moreover, should be traceable through the father, and not through the mother.

We see then the necessity that the Messiah should be of the stock of David, "the fruit of his loins" as it is stated, and that Jesus, however addressed, was not of that stock. Also that he was to be a mere human being, subject to "commit iniquity," and when transgressing to be "chastened," as a man, "with the rod of men ;" whereas Jesus was God-born and "without sin." (Heb. iv. 15). We further see that he was to be the king of Israel, upon the throne of David, putting down his enemies, and prominently the long extinguished

Assyrian, and that the time of this reign was to be that of the re-establishment of the Jewish nation,—features not realized in Jesus, and still unaccomplished. And if the facts are to be explained away by the process of spiritualizing them, if the descent from David is ideal and figurative, and the throne, the enemies, and renovated Israel, are to have a spiritual acceptation, why the painful struggle to associate Jesus with the literal facts by means of Joseph's genealogies and the birth-place in Bethlehem ?

Divinity of the Messiah.

(25.) There are clauses which certainly favour the idea that the Messiah was to be of divine origin, where it is said unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth," and that he was one "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." But these phrases, if such be their meaning, militate against the others that describe a human ruler ; nor do they help out the application of these prophecies to Jesus. Neither his god-head, nor his rule, have been visibly manifested, nor do we know anything of his "goings forth" from eternity. Dr Davidson's rendering of this latter passage is, "His origin is from of old, from the days of ancient time, i.e., his descent is from the very ancient house of David. Eternity is not here in the phrase." "What Jewish writer under the Old Testament," he adds, "ever thought that Messiah was truly and literally divine, or that his birth-place was eternity ? None." [1]

There is another passage of the like character which is commonly applied to the Messiah. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Isa. ix. 6, 7). The rendering of these appellations from the original is much called in question. Dr Rowland Williams gives the translation "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty Hero, Father of the age, Prince of Peace," [2] and tells us that Luther's translation of the chief term, El Gibbor, was like his, Might, Hero.[3] Dr Adler, a minister among

[1] Introduction to the Old Testament, III. 290. [2] Hebrew Prophets, 273.
[3] Introduction to Desprez's Daniel, lxii. lxxi.

the Jews, gives the same translation,[1] and he and Dr Williams point out that in other places in the scripture the phrase is applied to Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, the men of Moab, &c. But however rendered, the passage cannot be accepted as applying to Jesus until he may be exhibited "upon the throne of David."

In the Christian scriptures, attempts are made to support the pretensions of Jesus to a divine parentage by means of the older records. These I proceed to notice.

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. xxii. 41-45). The reference is to the 110th psalm. The object was to show thereby that the Messiah was spoken of by David as his "Lord," and therefore could not be his son, or descendant, upon which the inference was to be raised of Christ's superiority to David in his origin, so claiming for him a divine origin. If this be the true import of the phrase, it is singular that so weighty a doctrine should be left to be discovered by a mere inference. "The Davidic authorship of the psalm," says Dr Davidson, "cannot be sustained; some contemporary poet addressed it *to* him, on the basis of a divine oracle which the monarch had received as he was setting out on a warlike expedition. 'Jehovah said to *my lord*,' i.e., to the poet's sovereign."[2] In the Hebrew, distinct terms are used for those who are represented by the word "Lord" in the English translation, as if both were of like degree, divine beings. There it is "Jehovah said to my adonai," the first divine and the second here obviously human. And if the Messiah was in truth the personage spoken of as addressed, then Jesus did not occupy the position described. The subject of the psalmist is one who is to trample upon his enemies and to put forth "the rod of his strength out of Zion." It is the Jewish warlike Messiah who is here depicted, not the humble and suffering Jesus.

[1] Sermons (on the alleged Messianic Prophecies), 23.
[2] Introduction to the Old Testament, II. 285.

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be a Father, and he shall be to me a son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—But unto the son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. i. 5-8). Several passages are here appealed to as establishing the divinity of Jesus, namely Ps. ii. 7; lxxxix. 26, 27; xlv. 6, 7. The first of these relates to the martial "king" established upon the "holy hill of Zion." This was not Jesus. The second passage relates also to a warrior king whose "foes" were to be "beaten down before his face." This is apparently David himself. In neither instance does the sonship to God imply of necessity more than belongs to all who own his fatherly care. In the last passage there is nothing pointing to any one who may be called "the first-begotten into the world," or in fact to the "bringing in" of any one. It is a phrase introduced by the apostle to sustain his representations elsewhere that Jesus was such a first-born (Col. i. 15, 18). The person in question in the psalm is again a martial monarch whose "sword" and "arrows" are brought to view. "The sixth verse," observes Dr Davidson of the passage as it stands in the psalm, "which is rendered, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, should be translated, 'thy God's throne, i.e., thy throne given and protected by God, is for ever and ever.'"[1]

"As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. v. 6). This involves a resemblance to one, respecting whom the statement of the apostle is, that he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (Heb. vi. 3); a being, in effect, with the attributes of the eternal God. Where the apostle got his marvellous information concerning Melchisedec is not apparent. Jesus, at all events, had a mother, whatever may be said of his parentage on the father's side, and the parallel so far does not hold good. The apostle's reference is to the 110th Psalm, which, as already pointed out, relates to a warlike personage ruling in Zion.

[1] Introduction to the Old Testament, II., 283.

The seventy weeks of Daniel.

(26.) Seventy weeks, Daniel was informed through an angel, were appointed to bring to an end the dispensation for his people and city. "Know therefore," it was said to him, "and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. ix. 24-26).

The term "Messiah the Prince," Dr Adler gives as "the anointed prince."[1] Mr Desprez points out that the definite article is not used in the original, and that the phrase should be "an anointed, a prince,"[2] so that it is not indisputably clear that the Messiah is here intended, though the presumption, from the tenor of the prophecy, which embraces the consummation of God's dealings with the Jews, is that he is the prince pointed to. Jesus, however, has not fulfilled the exigencies of the designation. "My kingdom," he said, "is not of this world" (John xviii. 36); and he presents himself not as a prince, a dignity and position he neither emulated nor attained, but "humbled himself" and "took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7, 8). Nor was he ever anointed. Hengstenberg assumes that when Jesus was recognized at his baptism by the descent upon him of the dove, and by the voice from heaven, this was "his consecration as Messiah by the anointing from above,"[3] but he is not supported by any statement to such effect in the gospel narratives, and baptism, and the anointment of a crowned head, are two very different things.

The term of the seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, is divided into three periods of seven, sixty-two, and one week, representing respectively forty-nine, four hundred and thirty-four, and seven years. The events associated with these periods are the restoration of Jerusalem, the appearance of the anointed prince, such an one being cut off, and the events of the last week, which, being subsequent to the cutting off of the prince, need not be entered upon. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, "the street" and "the wall" "in troublous times," introduced in the text after the second of these

[1] Adler's Sermons, 107. [2] Desprez's Daniel, 177.
[3] Christology of Old Testament, III. 137.

periods, is commonly placed by interpreters between the first and second periods. This is Hengstenberg's method.[1] There is nothing in the text to warrant such a liberty. The arrangement is evidently suggested by the desire to find an event for the first period, and to free the text from the representation that the renovation of the city was to be the work of several hundred years. Dr Adler's rendering removes the opening for such a treatment of the passage. "Know, therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed prince, shall be seven weeks, and during threescore and two weeks the market-place and the ditch shall again be built even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks an anointed shall be cut off." According to this an anointed prince was to appear at the close of the first period, the rebuilding of Jerusalem was to be effected in the course of the second, and then another anointed personage was to be cut off. To add the seven weeks to the sixty and two, and to place the Messiah at the close of the united periods, as Christian commentators are in the habit of doing, is, he assures us, "altogether opposed to the grammatical construction of the sentence."[2]

The commandment to restore Jerusalem.

Adopting, however, the ordinary acceptation of the arrangements of the prophecy, it has to be seen whether even then its fulfilment can be said to have been established. This turns upon the ascertainment of the date from whence the prophetic period had its course. It was to begin when the commandment for the restoration of Jerusalem went forth. There are four edicts recorded in the scripture, the claims of which to represent the initiatory period have to be considered. The earliest is that issued by Cyrus in his first year (Ezra i. 1); the next is that of Darius in the second year of his reign (Ezra iv. 24; vi. 1); and the third and fourth are by Artaxerxes in his seventh and his twentieth years (Ezra vii. 8, 11; Neh. ii. 1-8).

The edict of Cyrus is this. "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord

[1] Christology, III. 141. [2] Adler's Sermons, 107, 108, 110.

God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." The terms here attributed to Cyrus, in acknowledgment of the God of Israel, are obviously the offspring of the mind of the Jewish writer who thus represents them. The work so sanctioned having been obstructed by ill-disposed persons, the Gentile authority was again appealed to. Search was then made in the records, and the above edict of Cyrus being produced, Darius re-enforced it. He said, "Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid." The first edict of Artaxerxes was to allow the exiled Jews freely to accompany Ezra to Jerusalem. "Whatsoever," it said, "is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven." Furthermore, Ezra was enjoined to "set magistrates and judges, which may judge the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God." Nehemiah learned that the city was still lying waste, and asked the king to be allowed to go and build it. His particular request was that he might have "a letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king," it is added, "granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me." The view commonly insisted on is that this, which is the last of these edicts, is the one from which to date the course of the prophetic period of the seventy weeks, as it is the only one in which the building of the city is actually mentioned, the others having reference to the reconstruction of the temple. The bearing of these several edicts has therefore to be examined.

The author of the prophecy represents himself to have been considering Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years' captivity, the close of which period was approaching. He set himself, "by prayer and supplication," to learn when the happy deliverance at the end of the term was to be (Dan. ix. 2, 3). On this the present prophecy was communicated to him, one measure of seventy being matched by another of the same sacred number. Some connection between these prophecies appears pointed to, and this is secured if the terminating period of the one is the opening period of the other. Just

such a result is obtained by accepting the edict of Cyrus as the act initiating the course of the present prophetic period.

It is objected that the edict mentions the reconstruction of the temple only. But a temple is nothing unless frequented and used by worshippers, and the worshippers must have habitations. It would be strange that Cyrus, so solemnly appealing to the name of God, should let his people loose from their captivity, allow them to rebuild the temple, and yet not contemplate their making the city, in which the temple was to stand, habitable. And that more than the building of the temple was included in the permission given appears from subsequent passages. Those hostile to the Jews wrote to the then king of Persia, informing him that they were "building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations," on which the records were looked into; and it having been found that the Jews had been addicted to rebellion, the king issued an order, saying, "Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded until another commandment shall be given from me." "Then," it is added, "ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia" (Ezra iv. 11-24). On this followed the second edict. Here we find that the edict of Cyrus, specifying the temple, was considered also to give warrant for the reconstruction of the city; and that the interdict of the next king directed against the reconstruction of the city, also operated to put a stop to the work of the temple. The city and the temple are associated together in the order of things, and so it was in the sense given to these edicts. Ezra's own construction was thus. He says, in view of the whole movement, "For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem" (Ezra ix. 9). A temple and a wall without a city would be ridiculous.

The edict of Darius named only the temple, but, according to this, the natural construction to be put upon it, the city was also included. The interdict points to this. The work on the

city was to be suspended "until another commandment shall be given;" and this was that other commandment. The whole illustrates what the prophecy states, namely, that the work should be carried on in "troublous times," a feature the writer could insert as he wrote after the event.

The third edict, being the first issued by Artaxerxes, clearly contemplates the fact that the city was being reconstructed under the authority of the former orders, for otherwise how could Ezra be expected to "set magistrates and judges" over the people?

The fourth edict, being the one insisted on as the initiatory order, has no such character. It was to afford Nehemiah a supply of timber to carry on the work, and was therefore merely supplementary to the earlier edicts. It has neither the breadth, nor the solemnity, nor the initiatory features necessary to give course to the prophecy, which was to have its commencement "from the going forth," or earliest issue of the "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." The edict of Cyrus has all these characteristics, and there are passages which put it beyond question that to his act the restoration of the city, as well as of the temple, is to be attributed. "Thus saith the Lord—that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built. That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. xliv. 24-28). "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed" (messiah), "to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him.—I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. xlv. 1, 13). Isaiah's prophecy, like that of Daniel, being written after the event, describes things as they occurred. To the edict of Cyrus consequently belongs, as a matter of history, the restoration of the city as well as of the temple.

This edict is said to have been issued B.C. 536. Taking the current reading of the prophecy, the Messiah should have appeared and been "cut off" sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years afterwards. But the death of Jesus did not occur till eighty-six years later. Commentators therefore take refuge in the last edict of Artaxerxes, which comes nearer the point. The marginal date given for this is B.C. 445, and as Jesus is said to have been put to death A.D. 33, this event occurred just five years too early for the prophecy. Hengstenberg places the edict at B.C. 455, which involves an error to the same extent the other way, taking the event five years beyond the term of the prophecy. He, however, adjusts this by means of a laboured examination of Roman authorities, producing uncertain and debateable results, whereby he gives the death of Jesus several years earlier than the date appearing in the received version of the Bible.[1]

The prophecy aims at exactitude, which certainly has not been secured; and for the divisional period of the first seven weeks, or forty-nine years, a fulfilment is altogether wanting. The current idea, however ill supported by the text, being that this time was occupied in the reconstruction of the city, Hengstenberg says, "So far as this particular point is concerned, but very modest claims can be put forth to a demonstration of the agreement between prophecy and its fulfilment, partly from the nature of the period itself, which is not detached, and sharply defined, and partly from the fact, that Josephus passes over this period altogether, and our historical information, therefore, is as good as none at all."[2]

The sceptre departing from Judah.

(27). "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come" (Gen. xlix. 10). Dr Adler observes that "throughout the whole Bible the word Shiloh is never applied to any personage. It is the name of a well known town in the centre of the Holy Land, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim."[3] Dr Rowland Williams, in like manner, says, "The Shiloh of Genesis xlix., meaning the local sanctuary of Ephraim, has been surrendered in its personal reference by candid interpreters."[4] Dr Adler's translation makes the use of the word in its sense of a town clear: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until he cometh to Shiloh."

Supposing, however, against the above fair presumption,

[1] Christology, III., 216, 222-239.
[2] Idem, II., 216, 217.
[3] Adler's Sermons, 11, 12.
[4] Hebrew Prophets, 152.

that a person is intended, Dr Adler points out that the application cannot be made to Jesus. "The sovereignty of Judah did not cease at the advent of the so-called Shiloh; it ceased 588 years before the birth of the Nazarene, when Nebuchadnezzar carried Zedekiah, king of Judah, into captivity. During the entire period of the second temple, not one king of the tribe of Judah ruled over the nation. The Jewish kings, during this period, were the Maccabees, (who, being high priests, were members of the tribe of Levi,) and Herod the Great, with his descendants, who were foreigners"[1] (Edomites).

Birth from a virgin.

(28). "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.—Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. i. 18, 22, 23). The passage so applied as a prophecy of the birth of Jesus is thus given. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.—Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz,—and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah." Then Ahaz is told to ask a sign that he is to be delivered from the impending danger, but he hesitates to do so, apprehending that this would be to tempt God. The prophet thereupon says, "Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." Then follows matter

[1] Adler's Sermons, 11.

connected with Assyria and Egypt, with which countries Judea was at the time involved (Is. vii. 1-18).

The word "Almah," here translated virgin, does not necessarily bear that signification. It means merely a young woman, and may be applied even to a married female. All Hebraists, among whom I may cite Strauss, Davidson, and Rowland Williams, so render the word. The circumstances which drew forth the prophet's utterances were those then surrounding Ahaz. They related to the hostilities threatening him, and his deliverance from the danger. The prophet chose to give him an assurance, such as here described, whatever its import or value. A young woman was to have a son, and while the child was still in his infancy the help was to come. The prophet apparently himself procreates the child signified. "And I took unto me, he says, faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, my father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria." And then he adds, to complete the position, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion" (Isa. viii. 2-4, 18). The history corresponds with the prediction thus recorded, the accuracy of which, it may be judged, was secured by its being written after the event, or with sufficient indications of what the event was to be. Ahaz sent messengers to the king of Assyria, "saying, I am thy servant and son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me;" and he purchased his services with treasures taken from the temple and his palace. "And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin" (2 Kings xvi. 5-9).

The prophecy, so to call it, becomes thus intelligible; but if the young woman in question was the mother of Jesus, then a "sign" was held out to Ahaz which he could never

witness. He was to be delivered very promptly, and the prophet, professing to be assured of his command of the divine resources, desired to keep up the king's courage by some outward demonstration in support of his word. Could it be that for this end he pointed to something to be enacted only after a lapse of more than seven hundred years? And how is Jesus, born at that date, to be associated with the two kings who were to be cut off before he should be old enough to know how "to refuse the evil and choose the good?" Or how could the action of Assyria, which long before had ceased to be, be brought to bear upon the matter?

Peace on earth.

(29). The angels who exhibited themselves to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus, in their invocation, said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke ii. 14). The mission of Jesus, even to this day, has worked no such results. "Think not," he said, "that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. x. 34-36). The angels prophesied the reverse of what has ensued. The Christian dogmas have ever been a source of vehement discord, expressed, too often, in oppression and bloodshed; nor is it likely that on grounds so debateable independent minds will ever be brought, over the face of the earth, to stand together in true and unreserved accord. Jesus is made to foresee such working of the doctrine, but this was so written at a time when the effects of the doctrine had become sufficiently apparent. It was a prognostication in conflict with the earlier one, put forward, as in other instances, after the event.

Called out of Egypt.

(30). The life of Jesus being threatened by Herod, he is removed to Egypt, and after the death of Herod, when the danger is supposed to be over, he is brought back, "that it might be fulfilled," we are told, "which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Matt. ii. 15). It would be easy to sustain the prophetic gift in this manner, namely to see what was written and then go and do it. Nevertheless, unfortunately, the application will not stand examination. The passage appealed to is this.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them." (Hos. xi. 1-3). The reference is of course to the exodus of the Israelites. How in view of the declared idolatrous practices of this progeny called out of Egypt Jesus can have been intended, it would be difficult to explain.

Rachel weeping for her children.

(31). To ensure the death of Jesus, Herod is said to have slaughtered the infants round about. "Then," it is declared, "was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (Matt. ii. 17, 18). Jeremiah appears to have had a vision in his sleep, in the course of which comes the utterance thus made use of. "At the same time," he tells us, "saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.—Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth.—And they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them.—For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob.—And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord; a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord; refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again to their own border. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.—Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.—Turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.—As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity.—For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my

sleep was sweet unto me." (Jer. xxxi. 1-26). The "lamentation" was that cry of repentance, that "coming with weeping and with supplications," which was to end in God's acceptance of the people and their national deliverance;—a deliverance, as it is expressly said, from "captivity." The evangelist has not hesitated in this, as in other instances, to wrest the passage he makes use of from its context, and to apply it to his own purposes, inapprehensive, or regardless, of its real import.

To be called a Nazarene.

(32). "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matt. ii. 23). Here is another unfortunate effort at propping up the narrative with prophecy. No particular prophet is cited for the saying advanced. The prophets in general are referred to, the fact however being that there are none who make any such announcement. The Messiah was to be derived from Bethlehem, but there is nothing to associate him with Nazareth, the true city of Jesus.

In the desire to support the gospel statement a solution is however sometimes offered. It has been observed that in speaking of the Branch to come out of Jesse, Isaiah (xi. 1) has used the term *Nezer*, which is supposed to convey "a mysterious allusion to Nazareth as the future home of the scion of David." But that the word has been here employed fortuitously, is apparent, as elsewhere, in describing this same Branch, the synonymous term *Zemach* has been resorted to (Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8; vi. xii).[1]

Elijah the forerunner.

(33). John the Baptist is said to have been the forerunner of Jesus the Messiah, "As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." (Mark i. 2). The prophecy itself has more particulars, and these of considerable precision. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's sope; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of

[1] Strauss' New Life of Jesus, II. 86, 87.

silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.—Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest "I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. iii. 1-4; iv. 4-6). It was a bold declaration to make that the well-known prophet Elijah should himself re-appear on earth and resume his ministrations preparatory to the advent of the Messiah, but it remains still unrealized. There was an attempt to pass off John as representing Elijah; "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come," (Matt. xi. 14); but John himself, when appealed to, was unaware that he was fulfilling such type. They asked him, "Art thou Elias?" and his answer was, "I am not." (John i. 21). Still the association of Elias with the Messiah remains a fixed necessity. Two advents of the Messiah are insisted on, and with him was to be Elias. But there is assuredly only one advent of Elias spoken of. And its concomitants are all dissimilar from what characterize the career of Jesus. When he came, he was not accepted with "delight" as the "messenger of the covenant," but rejected and put an end to. He was no "purifier of the sons of Levi" and renovator of the sacrificial offerings of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old, as in the former years, but introduced himself as a priest of another order, "of which," hitherto, "no man gave attendance at the altar," and for a sacrifice "offered up himself." (Heb. vii. 11-28). The old system was done away with "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof" (ver. 18). He introduced no "great and dreadful day," but himself fell under the power of his adversaries and "was crucified through weakness," (2 Cor. xiii. 4); and his dispensation has set aside that "law of Moses commanded in Horeb," with all its "statutes and judgments," which, according to the exigency of the prophecy, were to be renovated in purity.

(34). Another passage is also applied to John as prophesy-

The voice crying in the wilderness.

ing of him. "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matt. iii. 3). It stands in the writings of Isaiah thus. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. xl. 1-5). This application to John is another instance of a passage taken from its context, and applied in a sense at variance with its proper meaning. The voice in the wilderness is in association with the triumphant, not the suffering Messiah. It is raised when the dealings of God with the Jews are closed in their final acceptance and re-establishment in their own land. To say that John's utterance is a realisation of this voice when all the surrounding and ensuing circumstances were of a totally different character, is to treat the text with evident violation of its import.

The land of Zabulon, &c.

(35). "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. iv. 12-16). The object of the evangelist is to show that every act of the subject of his narrative was a fulfilment of ancient prophecy. Even so inevitable a circumstance in the life of a peripatetic teacher as his moving about from place to place had been foretold. But the process of application is, as usual, effected by extracting a passage to the exclusion of those parts attaching to it which give it a signification differing

from that which it is sought to ascribe to it. It stands thus in the original. "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations" (Isa. ix. 1). The evangelist picks out the names of the places, and associates them with the operations of his wandering teacher, carefully omitting all advertance to the "vexation," the being "lightly afflicted," or the being "more grievously afflicted," attaching to the mention of these places, which did not consort with his imputed meaning. The prophet was, in fact, occupying himself with an entirely different subject, namely, the physical sufferings of the nation occurring in his day from the assaults of their enemies. "For thou hast broken," he goes on to say, "the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.—Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.—Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.—They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm: Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah." The people dwelling "in the land of the shadow of death" were those suffering from the sword of their enemies in the days of Isaiah, and the "light" that "shined" upon them was the hope of deliverance from physical dangers which he promised them. Rezin and the Syrians are particularly instanced, and rescue from them he had just before prognosticated through the sign he put before Ahaz in the birth of his own son. That sign had been applied by Matthew to signify the birth of Jesus from a virgin mother; and now, in like manner, he takes the hope of escape from hostile operations, then threatening the Israelites, to signify the moral light presented to them, many centuries later, in the teachings of Jesus.

The acceptable year.

(36.) "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book.—And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 17-21). The passage made use of stands thus. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.—Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.—In their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.—And I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. lxi. 1-9). It is the oft recurring theme of the restoration of Israel and their domination over the Gentile nations. "The good tidings" proclaimed are not the "gospel" we are accustomed to hear announced by the followers of Jesus. They relate to positive deliverance from actual captivity, to material prosperity, to national ascendancy, and were not expressed by moral reformation merely, and still less by a fusion of all nations into one common assemblage, such as the Christian community, with equal advantages to all. The context has again been cut off to suit the occasion, and a very remarkable stop placed in the middle of a sentence where

its concluding portion warred against the application to be made of it. But "the acceptable year of the Lord," in the prophet's eye, is indisputably bound up with "the day of vengeance" of his God. Israel are not re-established till her enemies are finally overthrown.

Speaking in parables.

(37.) "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xiii. 34, 35). "Why," his disciples had asked, "speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (ver. 10, 11). This was certainly a strange type of discourse, intended avowedly to mystify, not to instruct. The object, however, was to place Jesus before us as one whose every step was assured upon prophetic utterances. His progress from place to place in Galilee is so marked out, and now his method of setting forth what he had to say. The passage relied upon as the prediction is this: "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works, that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps. lxxviii. 1-7). How such declarations as these were prophetic of the method of Jesus in his discourses is not apparent. The passage recited, as has commonly proved to be the case, conveys a signification the reverse of that for which it is made use of. It speaks of the revelation of God given forth with the utmost openness, to be transmitted from generation to

generation, to lead all to God, and not of doctrines deliberately veiled from the understanding of the multitude.

Taking on him our infirmities.

(38). "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 16, 17). The passage referred to is, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4). It is moral, not physical suffering, that is spoken of. There is not a word said as to bodily infirmities and sicknesses, or their alleviation. It is again a passage turned from its proper import in order to support the idea of prophetic action.

Who hath believed our report?

(39). "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him" (John xii. 37-41). The passages cited are these. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isa. liii. 1-3). "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.—Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? and he answered, until the cities be wasted without inhabitants, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" (Isa. vi. 1-12).

The passages here in question are on distinct subjects. The one relates to a personage presenting himself as a man of sorrows, and who is rejected; the other, to a visitation for a time of the Jewish nation. The Evangelist puts these passages together, and applies them to a very different purpose. He says they account for the rejection by the Jews of the miracles wrought before them by Jesus, wherein the "glory" of Jesus had been manifested, and which Esaias had seen and spoken of. What glory there could be in enacting wonders in the presence of people purposely hardened against accepting them, it is difficult to imagine; nor is it to be understood how Esaias, in describing certain conditions of things, can be said to have seen and spoken of certain others that are not mentioned by him.

The zeal of thine house, &c.

(40). "And the Jews' passover was at hand; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John ii. 13-17). The passage made use of is given thus. "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee.—For thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Ps. lxix. 1-9). What the utterances of the Psalmist,

when under the sense of sin and sorrow, can have had to do in foreshadowing the acts of violence attributed to Jesus in ejecting from the temple people with whose ways he was displeased, it is impossible to say.

Riding on an ass.

(41). "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass" (Matt. xxi. 1-5). The Evangelist does not see that the "ass" here spoken of, and the "foal of an ass," are one and the same, according to a Hebrew method of emphasising by reiteration, the phrase signifying "an ass, even a colt the foal of an ass." Falling into this error, he does not hesitate to shape the event to bear out his reading, representing that two animals were in question, and most absurdly stating that Jesus managed to seat himself upon both. "And (they) brought the ass," he says, "and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon." The other evangelists avoid such misreading, and with them there is but one animal, namely an ass's foal.

The chapter in which this prophecy stands, opens with denunciations of Tyre, Sidon, and the Philistines, who are to be overthrown or brought under subjection. The passage cited is associated with these events, and with the rule of the promised king of Jerusalem. "And I will encamp," it is said, "about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be

from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. ix. 8-10). The personage here spoken of is an actual earthly ruler. He is to put down all hostilities, and to exercise "dominion" over territories defined within certain expressed limits. He might show himself in kingly state, surrounded with the pomp and parade consistent with possession of wealth, dignity, and power; but his pleasure is to avoid all display indicative of pride, and to give evidence of the lowliness and humility of his disposition. And he does this by entering Jerusalem on an ass, as might any ordinary inhabitant. None of these surrounding circumstances belonged to Jesus. He possessed no armed forces; he put down no hostile nations; and he had no earthly possessions, far less any regal dominion. "His kingdom was not of this world." He claimed no territories stretching "from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." He came in "the form of a servant," and had not "where to lay his head." Known merely as the son of a carpenter, and an itinerant preacher, it was no humiliation, but rather an exaltation, to him, to be seen borne in any manner but upon his own feet. In those countries to ride on an ass is no degradation, this being still the ordinary conveyance of the wealthiest citizens. Jesus riding on an ass of itself expressed nothing, hundreds daily doing the like. To make the representation in Zechariah applicable as a prophecy, all those other circumstances, betokening the triumphant Messiah, were necessary; and in the instance of Jesus the whole were wanting. As on so many previous occasions which have been pointed out, the evangelist, eager to prove the one he wrote of to be the predicted Messiah, seizes upon some one incident or phrase, wrenches it from its context, and arbitrarily adapts it to his subject, regardless of the accompanying features, which, if cited, would expose the inapplicability of the reference.

Out of the mouth of babes, &c.

(42.) "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, "Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. xxi. 15, 16). The phrase in question might

be referred to legitimately as a saying, but certainly not as a prophetic one. It occurs thus. "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. viii. 1-4). The whole is an invocation to the Creator as displaying himself in his works, in which aspect Jesus was certainly not exhibited, either on the occasion in question or on any other.

Treachery of Judas.

(43.) "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." And when asked who it was who should betray him, Jesus, to be in keeping with the citation he had made, answered, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot" (John xiii. 18, 26). The passage quoted is thus given. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.—The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. Mine enemies speak evil of me, when shall he die, and his name perish?—All they that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.—Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them" (Ps. xli. 1-10). Was Judas Iscariot, never mentioned but to be held up to detestation, the "familiar friend" of Jesus? And was he one "in whom he trusted?" Armed with divine knowledge, Jesus is represented to have known him all along. "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen," "for he knew who should betray him" (John xiii. 11, 18), designating him "the son of perdition" (John xvii. 12). Judas' eating bread with Jesus, as the evangelist puts it, does not fulfil the prophet's

description, which is that of a dependant "which did eat of my bread." It is clear therefore, on all these grounds, that the Psalmist spoke not of Jesus and Judas. He had no such special act before him as the treachery of Judas. He was describing some mere mortal, broken down by persecution and ingratitude, and labouring under the sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness, a very common type of suffering humanity, but quite inapplicable to the divinely born and immaculate Jesus.

Wages of Judas.

(44). Judas receives thirty pieces of silver as the wages of his treachery. Afterwards, repenting, he casts the money down in the temple, and hangs himself. The chief priests, deeming it unlawful to place the money in the treasury, purchase therewith a potter's field. "Then," it is added, "was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me" (Matt. xxvii. 3-10). The evangelist, for whom inspiration is claimed, makes the mistake of quoting Jeremiah for Zechariah. The passage appears thus. "Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.—Thus saith the Lord my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter.—And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.—And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was priced at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (Zech. xi. 1-14). It is impossible to say what the prophet is speaking of, but at least it is apparent that the circumstances he puts together are not applicable to the act of Judas. It purports to be a time of judgment upon the Jews, who seem referred to under the

term "the flock of the slaughter." The judgment is expressed by breaking two staves, the fracture of one denoting a breach of covenant with the people, and that of the other, the severance of Judah and Israel. The poor of the flock recognise the word of the Lord, on which some one asks for his price, and gets it; and he disposes of the proceeds under divine instruction. What this action expresses, is not discernible. In the incident of Judas, he who gets the price is not the person priced, as in Zechariah, and the other circumstances introduced and associated with this pricing by the prophet are wholly wanting in the narrative of the evangelist.

Deposition of Judas.

(45.) Peter, in giving his account of the retributive end of Judas Iscariot, says it was what happened in fulfilment of that "which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas;—for it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take" (Acts i. 16-20). The citations are of Ps. lxix. 25, and cix. 8. The 69th Psalm, says Dr Davidson, "is not David's. Some righteous sufferer living in the time of the Babylonish captivity speaks. It is not Messianic."[1] This psalm is full of dreadful imprecations, not befitting the character ascribed to Jesus, and the utterances are those of one entreating for deliverance from the hands of his enemies, in a tone, and with a lack of confidence in the issue, which do not accord with the accounts of Jesus. Here also is the passage to the effect that gall and vinegar were offered to the sufferer by the enemies he is denouncing, of whom he adds, "let their table become a snare before them," "let their eyes be darkened;" and then follow the words Peter lays hold of and applies to Judas, "let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents." It is impossible, fairly, when many persons are alluded to for their acts, to ascribe the whole to one person and his individual act; nor did Judas engage in giving the "gall and vinegar;" neither is his particular act in any way indicated by the Psalmist. Of the 109th Psalm, Dr Davidson equally says it "was not written by David. It is not Messianic."[2] This Psalm also teems with awful denunciations. They are applied to some enemy, "because," it is stated among other things,

[1] Introduction to the Old Testament, II. 302. [2] Idem.

"that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart." This is not in keeping with the circumstances of Jesus and Judas, nor is the treachery of the latter in any way pointed to. The apostle has laid hold of some phrases of general import in these Psalms, and seeks to have them accepted as specially prophetic.

The man of sorrows.

(46). "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.—He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. liii. 3, 7); a passage which, when read to him by the eunuch, Philip applied to Jesus (Acts viii. 32-35). But what we hear of the life of Jesus little warrants the application. Begotten of God, and incapable of sin, the essence of his being placed him immeasurably above liability to the sinking infirmities of mankind. Angels announced and celebrated his birth with songs of joy. As he grew in stature, he advanced also "in favour with God and man" (Luke ii. 52). The Holy Ghost visibly descended on him, and a voice from heaven proclaimed his divine origin. When he spoke, "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke iv. 22). When he taught, it was as "one having authority," the people being "astonished at his doctrine" (Matt. vii. 28, 29). He knew that the lilies of the field were clothed by his heavenly Father; that the ravens depended on him for their food (Luke xii. 22-30); that not a sparrow falls to the ground without him; and that the very hairs of the head are all numbered (Matt. x. 29, 30); and with these truths, in the plenitude of his own assurance, he sought to build up the faith of others. For himself, he was placed above the reach of any want. The elements obeyed him (Matt. viii. 26, 27); evil spirits were subject to him; diseases vanished at his touch; food was generated at his will; and the dead rose to life at his bidding. The omnipotent, the all-knowing, could have had no earthly care, or fear, or sorrow. In the consciousness of his own resources, and the certainty of the issue put before him, his mission was calculated to elate whatever was human about him—not to depress him. It was one of measureless

importance and glory. The creation lay groaning in bondage (Rom. viii. 21, 22), and the Creator was in no condition to apply a remedy till his justice had first been satisfied (Rom. iii. 26). There was "none other name under heaven given among men," whereby they could be saved, but the name of Jesus (Acts iv. 12). Mankind were to look to him for escape from an otherwise inevitable doom, and God himself was dependent on him to reinstate his rule, and recover for him his lost creation. He became the central object of every regard, and in the position he had assumed as Redeemer, was to be "highly exalted," and to have a name given to him "which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11). The price to be paid for these great results was merely death, the common fate of that race of man whose form he had adopted. Many undergo it in circumstances of far greater trial than he endured; and he had more than ordinary support. He was specially strengthened for his sufferings by an angel from heaven (Luke xxii. 43), and, as he expired, was well assured that the next moment his eyes would be lifted up in paradise (Luke xxiii. 43). Multitudes of mere men would face such a fate as his with fortitude; and it is to attribute to him a weakness which would make him despicable, to suppose that the prospect of death, be it death on the cross, overthrew the equanimity of his mind, and rendered him a prey to habitual sorrow. It will be said that it was the sense and burden of our guilt that oppressed him; but this is absolutely incomprehensible. The burden, whatever it was, was about to be removed with six hours' exposure upon the cross; nor is it possible to conceive that an innocent being, able with confidence in his expiring moment to commend his spirit to God (Luke xxiii. 46), could have felt the pressure of sins that were not his.

If then what we are told of Jesus, of his being, his power, his mission, and his hopes, are really true of him, it is hard to discern in him the man of sorrows and griefs depicted by Isaiah. Neither was it the case that he was one so broken in spirit as to be unequal to saying a word on his own behalf.

On the contrary, he held his own in every discussion, proving always ready and able to put others in the wrong, and that not in the gentlest manner. Intolerant of opposition, he said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Matt. xii. 30). And he applied language to his adversaries freely, and on all occasions, of a sort that few could tolerate. "O generation of vipers," he said to the Pharisees, "how can ye, being evil, speak good things" (Matt. xii. 34)? "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!—Woe unto you, ye blind guides!—Ye fools and blind. —Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers;" expressions often repeated, with much virulence, through a long address (Matt. xxiii. 13-33). "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning,—a liar, and the father of it" (John viii. 44). Here, at all events, he was not bearing the sins of others, or sinking under the weight of their guilt, but was casting the burden, very determinately, where it should naturally lie, upon the transgressors themselves.

In the further portion of the same prophecy it is said, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.—Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong," circumstances certainly not fulfilled in respect of Jesus.

Predictions by Jesus of his death.

(47). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14, 15). "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die" (John xviii. 31, 32). "But last of all," Jesus said, in narrating a parable, "he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him

out of the vineyard, and slew him.—Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Matt. xxi. 37-42)? "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt. xxvi. 31, 32).

These are instances wherein Jesus is represented to have foretold his own death, and the manner of it. It must ever be remembered that the narratives having been written after the event, the statements do not come before us in the power of prophecies. If Jesus really made such declarations, they were prophetic to those who heard them. To us the sayings form merely portions of the whole narrative, their credibility depending upon the reliance we may be able to place in the narrators.

The brazen serpent.

Jesus was to be lifted up as the serpent in the wilderness, and to carry out the type he underwent the Roman punishment of the crucifix. But there is a marked distinction between the type and the antitype. The former worked physically. The sufferers were such in the flesh, and their eyes had to look upon the object that was to effect their deliverance. It was fitting, therefore, that this object should be exposed conspicuously to their sight. But the work of Jesus was altogether spiritual. The mind of any looking to him for deliverance was to be exercised over the fact of his death. The method, or accessories of it, could signify nothing. Accordingly, differing from the treatment of the serpent, he was speedily taken down from the cross, his exposure upon it expressing nothing.

The rejected corner stone.

Jesus was also likened to a stone rejected by the builders, but which became the head of the corner. The passage referred to stands thus. "I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear; what can man do unto me?—Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall; but the Lord helped me.—The Lord hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death.—I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity" (Ps. cxviii. 5-25). These are evidently the outpourings of a man who has been brought through ordinary tribulation. He has been in distress, and cried for help. God had chastened him, but spared his life, and eventually made him the head over those who had rejected him. The parallel in the case of Jesus is not a close one, and until he is seen made head of the corner it is incomplete. The statement involved is that he was offered as a corner stone to the builders, who would not accept him as such. In other words, that he presented himself to the Jews as their Messiah, the reconstructor of their nation, the corner-stone or foundation of their stability as a people; and as such was rejected. The question occurs, did Jesus present himself in this aspect to the Jews? And it can be answered only in one way. He came, it is said, with "no form nor comeliness," with "no beauty" that they "should desire him;" and not as a king, but as "a servant." Could any people be expected to receive one appearing to them in this guise as their stay and foundation, the prop of their strength, the corner stone of their prosperity? In fact, he give them no opportunity of accepting him in any capacity. When he was discovered to be the Christ, he strictly enjoined the parties, whether men or spirits, not to reveal the fact. As what then, save as some other than the Christ, did he offer himself to their notice? True, he wrought miracles; but it is no where said that the Messiah was to commend himself as a wonder-worker; and how can the Jews be charged with having rejected such testimony, when their eyes were purposely blinded against perceiving it? The parable, moreover, in which this saying of the rejected corner-stone is introduced, is not in keeping with the circumstances of the case. In the parable the son of the lord of the vineyard is sent by him to the husbandmen, who kill him in order to "seize on his inheritance;" but Jesus did not disclose to the Jews his proper position in this sonship; nor had he, to their knowledge, any

inheritance to be coveted ; nor could their compassing his death possibly put them in possession of anything.

The smitten shepherd.

Jesus also applied to himself a passage speaking of a shepherd who was smitten and his sheep scattered. It is this. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered.—And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied ; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive : but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman ; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands ? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts : smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered ; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die ; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried : they shall call on my name, and I will hear them ; I will say, It is my people ; and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. xiii. 1-9). It is impossible to say of what day, or what circumstances, the prophet spoke ; but it is clear that the particulars introduced by him do not relate to the day of Jesus. If a fountain for washing away sin was then opened in Jerusalem, it was not revealed to its inhabitants. The Jews had long before disconnected themselves with the sin pointed to, of idolatry. Prophesying was not discountenanced, but every effort has been made, as has been seen, to connect Jesus with the sayings of prophets. He himself exercised the prophetic gift and passed it on to his followers. If there were wounds on his hands, there were also such on his feet, which are unmentioned ; nor can these be said to have occurred to him, when nailed to the Roman crucifix, "in the house of his friends." The wounds spoken

of by Zechariah, if upon his "shepherd," were inflicted otherwise, by the "sword." He speaks, apparently, of some leader who is struck down and his people dispersed. The people, obviously, are the Jews, of whom two-thirds were to be "cut off and die," and one-third to be spared, and brought to the knowledge of God. The Jews cannot be represented as the sheep of Jesus, seeing they have never had knowledge of him as their shepherd. They formed no gathering under his leadership to be scattered when he was cut down. Nor were two-thirds of them put to death, and one-third saved and converted. As a body they rejected Jesus then, and still do so.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

(48). "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani ? that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). This exclamation, said to have been uttered by Jesus on the cross, is taken from an earlier scripture. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not ; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee ; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered ; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man ; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn : they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him ; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb ; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb : thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me ; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint : my heart is like wax ; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth

to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Ps. xxii. 1-15).

Jesus is represented making the exclamation in question in anguish of soul, seeking for escape from his cruel fate. He had previously betrayed the same desire in his prayer in the garden, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matt. xxvi. 39); or, as it is also put, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me" (Mark xiv. 36), the entreaty, however, concluding with the expression of submission to the Father's will. But how does this evidence of a wish, if possible, to avoid the task he had undertaken, consist with the nature of the task and the circumstances in which he came to its fulfilment? The object was the deliverance of the world, to be wrought out in this manner only. The first Adam had plunged the whole race in guilt and its consequences; the second Adam came forward for their redemption (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45-49). "Through death," he had to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, (as it is alleged,) the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). At the last moment he is seen to flinch from the suffering to be incurred. What if his prayer had been granted, and his life spared to him? He had said to God, on another occasion, "I know that thou hearest me always" (John xi. 42). What if he had heard him then? What would have become of the unredeemed race, with the triumph of Satan over the Creator left undisturbed, and complete, in the destruction of the creation?

But it elsewhere appears that Jesus, being a divine personage, had the power of his life in his own hands. "No man," he said, "taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). He was, therefore, not brought under the necessity of uttering the piteous cry attributed to him. If he really felt his position on the cross too painful a one to be endured, he had the remedy in his own hands, without need of raising a beseeching prayer for deliverance. It was as if one of us were marching to a precipice. We should be under no need to throw ourselves over it, or to call upon God to save us from such a catastrophe. We should merely have to exercise the power already conferred on us,

and turn aside, or retrace our steps. And so might Jesus, if the intense desire of escape was in his mind as represented.

The utterance, however, as it stands in the original, has no proper application to the circumstances of Jesus. It is the cry of a mere man, reduced to extremity, and earnestly beseeching God for that deliverance which he had no power of working out for himself. He had a feeling of being forsaken by God, which it is impossible to impute to Jesus, if himself God. He had cried, he said, in the day-time, but God heard him not, and in the night season. This condition of calling night and day upon God for help was assuredly not that of Jesus, who hung but six hours upon the cross when his life left him. The suffering Psalmist shows all the infirmity of a mere human suppliant. He builds up his sinking faith with what God had done for others of his race. "Our fathers trusted in thee," he said; "they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." And for himself, God had brought him into the world, and had sustained him in his helpless infancy. Then he entreats God to be still near him, quailing at the strength and number of his adversaries—the many bulls of Bashan, the ravening and roaring lions. The sense of his perils appals him; he feels himself poured out like water, with his bones out of joint, and his heart melting within him like wax. The whole description must be taken into account; and certainly it does not agree with what we are taught to believe of Jesus. The words of the earthly supplicant have been put into his mouth to establish a prophetic position, without thought of their incongruity.

They pierced my hands and my feet.

(49.) "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me" (Ps. xxii. 16, 17). This is a continuation of the same outpourings. "If we turn," says Dr Adler, "to the Hebrew original, we look in vain for a word corresponding to 'they pierced.'" His translation is, "For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; like a lion (they tear) my hands and my feet."[1] That Jesus was the emaciated object described in the psalm is assuredly not apparent. We hear of

[1] Adler's Sermons, 72-74.

him repeatedly at entertainments offered him, living as others, insomuch that he incurred the reproach of being "gluttonous and a wine bibber" (Matt. xi. 19). He was thus engaged at the house of Martha and Mary within a few days of his death (John xii. 2). He inculcated absence of thought or care for the morrow, and could have had none himself. He was able to produce food at will for multitudes in a desert place, and to pay his dues with money out of a fish's mouth. He could have suffered no personal want; and as he healed every manner of sickness with a word or a touch, must have been without disease himself. And when he expired it was with the "loud voice" of one in vigour of strength.

Parting his garments.

(50.) "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things, therefore, the soldiers did" (John xix. 23, 24). The prophecy referred to is in the psalm already under consideration. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth" (Ps. xxii. 18-21). The Psalmist was not absolutely given over to destruction. However imminent his danger, he had still hope of escape. What he feared was the "sword" of his enemies, and the "power" of those he designated dogs. Such was not the condition of Jesus, nailed upon the cross, and actually undergoing all that those who wished him ill could bring upon him. The narrative, we must always remember, may easily receive the degree of association with the prophecy we witness, by the citation of corresponding incidents, without regard to the real bearings and subject of the prophetic annunciation. That the evangelist has, on the present occasion, been guilty of shaping facts to correspond with prophecy, is apparent. He does not see that the "garments" and the "vesture" signify the same thing, this being an instance of emphasising by reiteration, as in the

case of the "ass" and the "colt, the foal of an ass." Matthew, to realize his sense of the phraseology, did not hesitate to introduce two asses, the dam and its foal; and so now John, to carry out his reading, scruples not to discriminate between the "garments" and the "vesture," assigning a separate action for each. And as the other evangelists, not falling into the error of Matthew, described but one ass involved, so now the remaining evangelists keep clear of John's mistake by stating that the lots were cast for the whole of the apparel together. "They parted," it is said, "his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take" (Mark xv. 24).[1]

I thirst.

(51.) After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John xix. 28-30). The scripture referred to is this. "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.—O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.—I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment: —and I was the song of drunkards.—Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink.—Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.—Hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.—Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and

[1] Strauss' New Life of Jesus, II. 371, 372.

that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.—Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.—For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Ps. lxix. 1-28).

The picture here given cannot be a representation of Jesus. It is that of a poor suffering mortal, weak in faith, overcome by a sense of his sinfulness, and striving with difficulty to realize the presence of God, and his supporting power. He had become an outcast from his own kindred. He had chastened his soul with fasting, and mortified himself by clothing himself in sackcloth. He trembled at the thought of the bottomless pit, and called upon God to draw near to his soul and redeem it. He was oppressed by reproaches heaped upon him, and the absence of comforters. He still hoped for deliverance, and called for vengeance on his persecutors, whom he consigned to everlasting perdition.

Jesus was never in this abject state. He was himself sinless, and had God ever with him. He was the son "in the bosom of the Father" (John i. 18). He and the Father were "one" (John x. 30). Whoever had seen him, had "seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). He was no outcast, but mixed freely with those around him, partaking of their hospitalities. Nor was he disowned by his kindred, who interested themselves in him (Matt. xii. 47; xiii. 55, 56). To fasting he was not addicted, but discouraged the practice in his own day. "Why," he was asked, "do the disciples of John fast often,—but thine eat and drink." To which he replied, "Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Luke v. 33-35). His presence was thus to be a signal of joy, not of mortification and dejection. Nor was sackcloth, the type of woe, his clothing. The fear of the pit was not upon him. "To day," he could confidently say to the dying thief by his side, "shalt thou be with me in paradise." Whatever reproaches he may have endured, the sense thereof could have

weighed little with him in these his last moments. Nor did he seek for vengeance upon his enemies, and least of all for their eternal damnation. He had come to save all mankind, and in this his death sacrificed himself for them. His last words consequently were in intercession for those who had brought him to this pass. "Father, forgive them," he said; "for they know not what they do." And so, in peaceful confidence, he yielded up his life, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 34, 46). In every respect he stands in contrast to the faint-hearted, erring, and vengeful Psalmist.

A bone of him not to be broken.

(52.) "These things were done that the scriptures should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall "not be broken" (John xix. 36). There is no such passage affecting the Messiah. The reference is doubtless to the rule respecting the paschal lamb. "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof" (Ex. xii. 46). The circumstances of the two events altogether differ, although the representation of the paschal sacrifice is claimed for Jesus (1 Cor. v. 7). He suffered as a criminal; his executioners were the pagan Romans; no ceremonial rite was associated with his death; and his body, not seen to be that of a victim offered up at any shrine, was committed to the grave as an ordinary corpse. The mere circumstance of the non-breaking of his bones, in the absence of every other needed feature of correspondence, ill suffices to present him as undergoing an end prefigured by the paschal lamb.

The sacrifice of Jesus.

(53.) "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 4-7). This, the apostle says, was a representation of the sacrifice which Jesus made of himself for the sins of mankind, in order to "sanctify" them to God. The passage is taken from Ps. xl. 6-8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I,

Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest." The Psalmist is one of the human family, who could say of himself, truthfully, it must be assumed, in the workings of genuine repentance, "mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." This could not be the condition of Jesus, who was sinless. Nor is the position described that of one, who, in the consciousness of the inefficacy of all other sacrifices, came forward with the offering of his own blood. The "body hast thou prepared me," for the end of this human sacrifice, is not in the original. The apostle has cited as written what is not written, in order to make the passage bear the meaning he imputes to it. Neither is there any note that the utterance of the Psalmist was made "when he cometh into the world," as if he had come in differently from others of the human race, and specially to offer up this sacrifice. The Psalmist, in point of fact, recognizes in God an absolute aversion to sacrifice of any kind. "Sacrifice and offering," he says, "thou didst not desire:—burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required." He disallows the whole Jewish sacrificial system, (if indeed he knew anything of it,) as what was not of God,—neither proceeding from his wish, nor of his ordination; and in thus exhibiting God as averse to all sacrifice, he equally shows that it would be against his mind to authorize or accept such a sacrifice as that of Jesus, for which the apostle, nevertheless, has claimed from him prophetic recognition and support. What the Psalmist does disclose is that all that God requires of a sinner is the submission of his heart and will to him, but this representation not suiting the doctrine the apostle was aiming to enforce, he refrains from producing it.

The sacrificial types.

The idea that the sacrificial usages which are said to have prevailed from the foundation of the world, beginning with the blood offering of Abel, were typical of the death of Jesus, cannot be properly sustainable, where, as in his case, there was neither altar, priest, worshipper, or employment of the sacrificial knife, to fulfil the resemblance. The slaughter of innocent animals to appease their divinities prevailed in all heathendom. The very rites observed by the champion of the true God, Elijah, were those practised by his opponents the priests of Baal. If the Jews obtained their form of worship from a divine source, from whence could the followers of Baal have had theirs? And if it be the case that these Jewish sacrifices pointed to, and culminated in, the offering up of the only begotten Son of God as a sacrifice to his Father, in what respect did this latter action differ from the culmination of the pagan sacrifices in the horrific rites of Moloch?

They shall look on him they pierced.

(54.) "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced" (John xix. 37). The passage is thus introduced. "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.—And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart" (Zech. xii. 8-14). Of what day the prophet spoke it is impossible to say, but assuredly it was not that of Jesus. There was then no such intervention for Jerusalem, which was under the dominion of the Romans, and finally succumbed to them; nor were the Jews brought under a spirit of grace and supplication; nor did they regard Jesus, or mourn for him, pierced as he may have been in common with other accounted culprits.

Numbered with transgressors.

(55.) "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors" (Luke xxii. 37). The passage referred to is this. "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of

the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.—He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 8, 9, 12). That Jesus died for the sins of others is commonly accepted, but such is not the manner of the narrative. He was brought before the constituted authority to answer for himself, and being found guilty, suffered condemnation. The most that can be said is, that the sentence was an unjust one. This might occur before any human tribunal, but the innocence of the accused is in itself no evidence that he suffered for the sins of others. That Jesus was taken from prison, as described by Isaiah of the person he had in view, does not happen to have been the case. He passed from arrest to judgment, and then to execution, without being incarcerated. Nor were the particulars of his death and burial such as described by the prophet. The crucifixion between thieves would bring him into contact with the wicked in his death; but here it is an association "with the rich in his death" that is in question. The fact is, that the "wicked" and the "rich" spoken of by Isaiah are one and the same,[1] according to the Hebrew manner of arresting attention by reiteration with varied phraseology. To fulfil the declaration of the prophet, nothing was more unfortunate than that Jesus should have been laid in the tomb of a godly man.

The resurrection.

(56.) "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40). "And he began to teach them, that the son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark viii. 31). "He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 4). The appeal to the incident of Jonah, as of prophetic import, is made without any warrant from the narrative itself that it had such meaning; nor can any position be strengthened by reliance on a tale so manifestly unreal. The application is, morever, inaccurate. Jesus expired about three o'clock[2] on the afternoon of his execution,

[1] Strauss' New Life of Jesus, II. 396.

[2] Renan's Life of Jesus, 292.

which was a Friday, or the day preceding the Jewish Sabbath. The tomb was visited at dawn on the Sunday morning, when the body was found to be gone. At what time the resurrection took place we are not informed. So that we have a prediction respecting a precise period of time, without means afforded for marking the time. But of one thing we may be certain, namely, that the event predicted falls much within the time given for its occurrence. Jesus was not three days and three nights in the tomb, as Jonah was in the whale's belly. Supposing he was in the tomb up to the moment when it was found empty, which is uncertain, he was there but one day and a fraction and two nights, or just half the predicted period.

Another passage sometimes cited for the statement is this. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning: and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos. vi. 1-3). This speaks of the renovation and refreshment of Israel as the consequence of their repentance. They have been chastened, and so brought to turn again to the Lord; a position not belonging to Jesus, who was without sin, and always one with God. It relates to a plurality of persons, to whom, as it were, new life was to be imparted, and not to a single individual as Jesus. And it is by no means apparent that the vivification is otherwise than a spiritual one, not meaning, as our case requires, the reanimation of the physical body.

"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts ii. 27). The citation is made by Peter from the 16th Psalm, the allegation being that "David speaketh concerning" Jesus, and so prophesies of his "resurrection." The "proper reading," says Dr Davidson, is "*holy ones* or *saints;* not the singular, *thy holy one;* showing that it refers to the pious generally. '*Suffering his pious ones not to see the grave* is to *deliver them from the peril of death.*'" "Besides," observes the learned critic, "the fourth verse is inapplicable to Christ, 'their drink-

offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.' How can the Messiah say with propriety that He will not join in the iniquitous services of idolaters, nor even name the names of their deities?"[1]

"And as concerning that he raised him from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David" (Acts xiii. 34). Paul here speaks, citing Isa. lv. 3, in evidence that the resurrection of Jesus had been proclaimed by the prophet. But it will be found that Isaiah is referring to any who may be brought to God, and not to some particular personage, and he the Messiah. He calls upon "every one that thirsteth" to "hearken diligently unto him," "to incline their ear, and come unto him," to "hear and their soul should live," and then adds that with such he "would make an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David." Neither Jesus, nor his resurrection, are here in question. Paul also supports himself with the passage from the 2d Psalm, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," and with that taken by Peter from the 16th Psalm, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," neither of which, as I have already pointed out, are applicable to Jesus.

The ascension.

(57). "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts ii. 34, 35). This is a citation by Peter from the 110th Psalm. Jesus (Luke xx. 42, 43), and Paul (Heb. i. 13), also appeal to the passage, but with a different view, namely as evidencing the divinity of the Messiah. I have shown that this Psalm is not considered ascribable to David, and that its subject cannot be Jesus.

The call of the Gentiles.

(58). "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts xv. 15-17). The passage referred to is taken from Amos ix. 11, 12, and stands thus. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up

[1] Introduction to the Old Testament, II. 279.

his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this." The speech in Acts is that of the apostle James, made at a convocation held in Jerusalem, after the death of Jesus, respecting the treatment of the Gentile converts. The citation he makes is verbally inaccurate, and especially so in reference to the subject then in hand. Amos was speaking of the restoration of Israel under the triumphant Messiah, when God would "bring again the captivity of his people," and would "plant them upon their land" (ver. 14, 15). "The tabernacle of David" was at this time to be restored, and the Edomites, and other heathen nations, brought under subjection. James misuses the passage, and keeping out of view the name of Edom, which is the clue to the peoples to be dealt with, as also to the character of the dealing with them, turns the subjugation of the Gentile tribes in question, nationally, by the ruler on the throne of David, into the adhesion of the Gentiles, generally, to the doctrines of the suffering and rejected Jesus.

The second advent.

(59.) "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Then follow the signs of the consummation predicted, namely wars, famines, pestilences, &c., which are "the beginning of sorrows;" also false prophets, the setting up of "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet in the holy place," and the appearance of false Christs. But "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shal send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shal

gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 1-35).

The question and the answer together make it apparent that there was to be a chain of events, embracing the destruction of Jerusalem and the return of Jesus in glory, at what is termed "the end of the world," the whole of which was to be brought to pass in the time of the then existing generation. So far as regards the destruction of Jerusalem, it was a prediction written after the event, and that part of the announcement stands true. The remainder, being the portion unaccomplished when the narrative was written, has not been realized after the lapse of now eighteen hundred years.

Nearness of advent.

The Christian's hope of a glorious Messiah stands consequently as much defeated as the similar expectation of the Jews. But it is nevertheless still clung to in spite of the abundant evidence that the advent is one that should have taken place shortly after the commencement of the dispensation. "A little while," Jesus said, "and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father" (John xvi. 16). There are two periods, one in which he would remain in sight, and one when he should have gone to the Father and be out of sight; and both are spoken of in the same terms as amounting to but "a little while." His stay on earth, when this was spoken, extended to but a few days. He could not have meant that his return to earth was to be postponed for many centuries. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.—Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 12, 20)—promises and invocations with which the book concludes, but which have become void by lapse of time.

The statement was, that the existing generation should witness his return and the end of all things, and the same

has been repeated on various occasions. Speaking of the trials to which his followers were to be subjected before his reappearance, Jesus said, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matt. x. 23). "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 27, 28). "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thes. iv. 15-18). "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (Rev. i. 7). All this is explicit enough, and evidently applicable to those actually addressed. Jesus was to be revealed to them in glory attended by the angelic hosts. Some of them were not to taste of death till he so returned. They were to be caught up to him when he came, and were to comfort each other with this hope. Those also who had been guilty of his death would see him reappear in avenging power.

Application of nearness of advent to doctrinal teaching.

Such being the hope put before the followers of Jesus, it was constantly appealed to for enforcement of doctrine. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. xiii. 11, 12). "Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.—But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none: and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as

though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 27-31). "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing" (Phil. iv. 4-6). "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. v. 2-6). "I give thee charge in the sight of God,—that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. vi. 13, 14). "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.—Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 23-25, 35-37). "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James v. 7-9). "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Peter iv. 7). The disciples of Jesus were to be as men looking for daylight at the coming of dawn. Sleep for them was impossible. The season of darkness had nearly expired; the light was approaching; the judge of all was at the very threshold, ready to enter. Social ties, worldly interests, griefs and joys, were as nothing

to men on the verge of realizing their glorious expectations. This consideration was to influence them in all things, in acting in the world, or towards each other. The time, short in itself, visibly grew shorter and shorter. The end, bringing joy to themselves, and grief to the adversaries, was at hand; and they were to comfort and strengthen one another in the certainty, and the nearness, of this happy issue.

Testimony of Apocalypse.

The Apocalypse unfolds the circumstances attendant on this grand consummation, and it speaks with the same assurance of its early advent. It opens thus. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (i. 1). And it concludes in the like vein. "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done" (xxii. 6). Again, at the outset, the declaration is made, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (i. 3). And so also at the close. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.—Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (xxii. 7, 10). These sayings affected the generation then addressed, in whose days all the predictions they conveyed were to be brought to pass.

Precise period unrevealed.

But though conscious that the time for his return was near at hand, Jesus professed himself unable to say when it was that the event so important to all interested in it was actually to take place. It is inexplicable how ignorance on any subject could attach to a divine personage such as Jesus; but so the matter is indubitably put before us. "Of that day," he said, "and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark xiii. 32). The fact was there, but when to be brought about it was not for him to know. And when asked, after his resurrection, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel," he could still make no revelation. "It is not for you," he said, "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts i. 6, 7). Jeremiah could be entrusted with information of the precise duration of the

captivity in Babylon, and Daniel with the limits of the period that was further to elapse to the close of the Jewish dispensation. The return of Jesus in glory could be but as the last mentioned period expired ; and yet, as the term approached, he, the Son of God, was not to know when this consummation of his work was to be effected. What was distant could be prophetically revealed ; what was near at hand was not to be disclosed; a distinction convenient for the prophet, however little so for the expectants.

The suffering and the triumphant Messiah.

(60.) These are the prophecies relied upon as presenting Jesus to us in the attributes of the Messiah. The question between Jews and Christians is, has there been any exhibition of the promised deliverer ? The Christians answer it by asserting a division in his characteristics and career of so marked a nature as really to constitute two different beings ; the one abject, suffering, and rejected ; the other accepted, powerful, and glorious. But when the prophecies appealed to for support of the idea of a suffering Messiah are examined, they are found, one and all, so mixed up in time and circumstances with what belongs to the glorious one, that the severance claimed cannot be conceded, or the twofold advent seen to exist. Zacharias, when he proclaims the birth of Jesus, describes the triumphant rôle which he never fulfilled. The appeals are frequent to Moses as well as to the prophets, but Moses has not a word respecting a suffering Messiah. The successor to himself was to be a true leader of the people, such as he was, and not a rejected one. The promises to Abraham had respect to an earthly inheritance not realized by Jesus, and those to David involved an occupant of his regal throne to which Jesus never attained. Daniel's anointed one, who was to be cut off, if the same as his Messiah, was to be a princely personage. The Elias that had to come, was to appear when the Messiah displayed himself in power. A double advent of Elias, to correspond with a double advent of the Messiah, is not spoken of. The voice crying in the wilderness, does so when Israel are comforted and the glory of the Lord revealed. The "acceptable year of the Lord," comes not without "the day of vengeance of our God." The personage entering Jerusalem on an ass, does so as an actual king. The man of sorrows cannot be identified among other sorrowing ones till he "divides a

portion with the great," and "the spoil with the strong ;" nor can the stone rejected of the builders be discerned, among other stones, as what was to be the head of the corner, till it becomes distinguishable in actuality, as the foundation of the edifice. The pierced one, is so pierced when Jerusalem is made to triumph over all her adversaries. If the prophecies of Jesus are to be dependent on those relating to the Messiah in glory, then Jesus, as we have him, has not been prefigured in prophecy. And it is vain to claim for him the office of the Messiah, without showing that he has executed the Messiah's appointed work. The non-renovation of the Jewish nation is a standing evidence that their Messiah has not yet appeared.

Instruction by miracles and prophecy.

PUNDIT.—I have carefully considered the paper you have been good enough to lend me. Your examination of the different subjects of prophecy makes it unnecessary for me to offer observations of my own. I come, in view of all you have put before me, to the conclusion that the channels of instruction held forth by the Christians are not such as God makes use of. He does not risk his communications to the uncertain vehicle of a written record, depending upon man for its safe custody, transmission, and interpretation. He reveals himself to us through the unerring laws of nature, physical and moral, and does not seek to attract our regards, or instruct our minds, by disturbing those laws. We are to trace cause from effect, and if wrong effects are produced, we steer clear of the evil by avoiding the cause. We judge of the future by the past, seeing what results from the influence of events, single and combined, and regulating our course accordingly. But all this wholesome method of instruction is superseded if we are to be cast upon the operations of marvel-mongers, and the indications of those who profess to reveal to us what has yet to come to pass. I do not believe that God is thus untrue to his own system. I have seen the hollowness, and the folly, of a religion built up among my own people upon the marvellous, and am little tempted to embrace another form which I perceive is supported upon the like foundations.

HISTORY OF JESUS.

VII.

RENEWED CONVERSATION.

PUNDIT.—Will you be good enough now to put before me the particulars of the life of Jesus, upon the reality of which the Christian dispensation so entirely depends?

STUDENT.—I will do so with pleasure.

Narrative. The Jews were expecting the advent of a great personage, who was to deliver the nation from their oppressors, and rule over them in triumph. He was to be a lineal descendant of their early and renowned king David, and was to be known as the Messiah, or the Christ, terms which signify the anointed one. Jesus is considered to have been the person thus indicated.

He was to be preceded by a messenger, who was to prepare the world for his coming, and who is designated in the old prophecy as "Elijah the prophet." There were a priest and his wife, named Zacharias and Elizabeth. These were aged people, and the wife was barren. Suddenly an angel appeared to Zacharias while officiating in the temple, and said to him, "Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.—Many shall rejoice at his birth.—He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The child was duly born, and known as John the Baptist, and he is considered to have been the promised precursor of the Messiah.

Three or four months before the birth of John, the same angel, who was called Gabriel, appeared to a cousin of Elizabeth's, named Mary. She was "a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." The angel announced to her that she was to have a son, who was to be named Jesus, of whom he said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Mary wondered how she was to have a child, "seeing," as she observed, "I know not a man." On this the angel said to her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God." Mary, accordingly, "was found with child by the Holy Ghost." Her husband Joseph, discovering her condition "before they came together," was "minded to put her away privily," not wishing to make a "public example" of her. An angel then appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Joseph, accordingly, "being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son; and he called his name Jesus."

P.—Allow me to interrupt you and to ask a few questions. Zacharias and his wife are represented to have been advanced in years, and the latter to be barren. The angel informs Zacharias that his prayer had been heard, and that his wife was to bear him a son. Is it likely, under the circumstances, that Zacharias could still have been hoping and praying that his aged partner should become prolific? Birth of John.

S.—The probability is, undoubtedly, much against his having indulged in such a hope. In fact, when the assurance was given him that his prayer was to be fulfilled, he appeared to think this impossible, and was struck dumb for a time for his incredulity. The statements, therefore, here involve some inconsistency, faith in prayer meeting with its reward, and

judgment overtaking a doubter, and both visitations affecting the same individual at the same moment. Similar interventions by God had, however, repeatedly occurred. The wives of Abraham and of Isaac, and one of Jacob's wives, were all afflicted with barrenness, and God nevertheless gave them children, the first named when in old age. The wife of Manoah, from whom came Samson, and Hannah, the mother of Samuel, present similar instances. Zacharias may have been encouraged by these interpositions to hope for a like favour in his own case.

P.—I should rather conclude that the incidents had been introduced just to magnify the importance of the persons represented to have been so marvellously brought into the world. It is more probable that the writers should have worked from the same idea, derived from one another, than that God should have been in the habit of repeating himself with the same manifestations.

Coming of Elias.

The precursor of Jesus was to be Elijah the prophet, a well-known personage in the preceding dispensation. How can this be said to be fulfilled by the appearance of a new and unknown person, namely John the Baptist?

S.—You will observe it was said by the angel who announced the birth of John that he was to act "in the spirit and the power of Elias." Jesus, referring to John, said, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. xi. 14.) Afterwards, when the real Elias had appeared together with Moses at the time that Jesus was transfigured on the mount, the disciples put the question to him, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" On which he answered, "Elias truly shall come and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Then the disciples," it is added, "understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (Matt. xvii. 10-13).

P.—This appears to me most unsatisfactory. If the real Elijah had just appeared on the mount, could Jesus have pointed to an ideal Elijah as accomplishing the prediction? And would the disciples have accepted such a solution? Nothing could fulfil the position but the appearance of Elijah the prophet himself. To say of another, acting in his spirit

and power, that he was the one spoken of, is no fulfilment, but a mere accommodation. The sense of this weakness appears felt where it is said, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias." Anything whatever may be so accepted, "if ye will receive it." He might have said equally, "This is Abraham, or Moses, if ye will receive it." Afterwards comes the bolder assertion that "Elias is come already;" but this is quite neutralised by the admission made just before that Elias had yet to come, and restore all things. All I can see is an impotent attempt to make it appear that the predicted mission of Elias was fulfilled in John, and I cannot but think that the scene of the transfiguration, wherein the true Elias is said to have shown himself, has been introduced just to help out this idea, though certainly in a clumsy manner.

Mission of John.

May I ask did many rejoice at the birth of John the Baptist? and did he effect all that the angel declared he should do, namely, turn many of the Israelites to God, bring the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord?

S.—There is no record of people rejoicing at the birth of John, nor is it conceivable how, with nothing to mark him out for notice, there should be any such public demonstration at his coming into the world. His ministry is said to have taken effect upon the whole country round about, it being declared that "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," went out to him confessing their sins and receiving baptism at his hands (Matt. iii. 5, 6). This, however, on the face of the statement, is clearly an exaggeration, and the universality of John's influence is directly contradicted elsewhere, where it is said that "the publicans justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him" (Luke vii. 29, 30). The same unqualified language is used of the offices of Jesus, of whom it is said, "the same baptiseth, and all men come to him" (John iii. 26); whereas, we are also told, "he came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John i. 11). John's preaching consisted in his calling out, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2), and his baptism is hence described as "the baptism of repentance for the re-

mission of sins" (Mark i. 4). He, however, clearly declared that his mission was of inferior import to that of Jesus, and unattended by spiritual influences. "I indeed baptise you," he said, "with water, unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. iii. 11). Jesus, on the other hand, greatly exalted John, saying of him, "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. xi. 11), putting him thus on a level with Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, &c.

P.—All that is said of John seems to me marked with gross exaggeration. He could not have baptized the whole region round about, if they all came and were baptized by Jesus. The statements neutralize each other, and the passages you cite as opposed to them contradict them effectually. John seems to have held Jesus up to admiration, and in return Jesus John.

John called on men to repent, as the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Was such kingdom established?

S.—There has been nothing of the kind as yet. Jesus in fact said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36).

P.—Then John's appears to have been a vain message. His baptism is said to have been for the remission of sins. Does this mean that those who underwent it had their sins washed away?

S.—That cannot have been so, as it is said, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). The only blood that could wash away sin is that of Jesus, and that had not been shed.

P.—Then of what use was the office of John? If the repentance and the baptism he called for could neither take away sin, nor command spiritual influences, of what value was it?

S.—John's baptism is shown to have had no efficacy. The true baptism was that appointed by Jesus after his resurrection, which was to be "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). Paul, in the course of his ministry, met with persons who had undergone John's baptism only, and who had "not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost;" and explaining to them

that John had merely to lead up to Jesus, he baptized them afresh "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix. 1-5). Moreover, the statement made that there is but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5), disallows all the prior baptisms.

P.—As John is said to have been filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, it is strange that his disciples should not even have heard that there was a Holy Ghost.

S.—It is so certainly.

P.—Seeing that Jesus offered himself to his own, and was rejected by them, and finally crucified, how can John be said to have made ready a people prepared for the Lord?

S.—I cannot tell you.

P.—What were the positive fruits of his mission, or those of Jesus after him.

S.—The number of the disciples after the death of Jesus was "about an hundred and twenty" (Acts i. 15), and there were followers of John such as those who were rebaptized by Paul, as above mentioned.

P.—And is this all that can be spoken of after the whole of Judea and all the region round about had confessed their sins, and been baptized by John and by Jesus in succession to him? The mission of John, instead of marking him out as one of the greatest men who had ever lived, seems to me to have been stamped with absolute failure.

If the true baptism had to be established after the death of Jesus, and a preliminary baptism, whatever purpose it was meant to serve, was committed to John, what could be the occasion for the baptism dispensed by Jesus to so many during his lifetime; and dispensed, it would seem, in vain, so far as gathering them in as his followers was in view?

S.—I am unable to say.

Birth of Jesus.

P.—The next event is the birth of Jesus. The subject is introduced in a conversation between an angel and Mary. He tells her that she is to have a son, and at this she expresses extreme wonderment, seeing that she "knew not a man." But as she was at the time affianced, or as good as married, to Joseph, this feeling of surprise is certainly out of place. The incident has the appearance of having been brought in just to

allow of the promised conception by the Holy Ghost being introduced with effect.

With the miraculous birth of a being of human form, but divine origin, I am already familiar from Hindu fictions. The parentage of Jesus is derived from the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Christian Trinity. The angel speaks of the Holy Ghost to Mary as if already familiarly known to her, as he did also to Zacharias in respect of his promised son. On the other hand, you have mentioned disciples of John who had never heard that there was a Holy Ghost. When was the revelation of this person in the Trinity first made?

S.—His existence is nowhere spoken of previously to the occasions now in question.

P.—And yet Mary takes it as a matter of course that she is to have a child by him! The fact we really have to deal with is that of a young person, accounted a virgin, being found by her husband already with child. As he was about to put her away for profligacy, it would seem she must have kept back from him the revelation made to her by the angel. Is it conceivable that she should run such risks? When her husband discovered for himself the condition she was in, he must of course have questioned her closely on the subject, and what could have been her answer? It must be presumed that then at least she must have told him of the apparition to her of the angel Gabriel, and of the consequent conception by the Holy Ghost; and it must be concluded that, if she made such a statement, he could not have accepted it, as till he got the assurance of his own dream his intention was to divorce her. And if he could not credit Mary's subtantial declaration of what she had witnessed with her own senses, would a dream have sufficed to satisfy him of the chastity of his wife, and that the parent of her coming offspring was that mysterious personage the Holy Ghost, hitherto unheard of by any one?

S.—According to Matthew's narrative, Joseph, it is clear, knew nothing of the revelation made to Mary. It is stated, after speaking of his discovering the state of Mary and his design to put her away, that "while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream." Nor was a word said to him in this dream of the apparition to Mary. The silence of Mary is certainly not to be reconciled

with the fact that she had received such a revelation; neither is it consistent with the divine method to suppose that such an annunciation should have been made twice, and in independent form. It is commonly held by critics that there was but one such annunciation, and that the two narratives are in conflict as to the circumstances under which it was made. Luke gives it as made to Mary, and Matthew as made to Joseph, neither speaking of the event told by the other.

P.—And is it upon accounts so inconsistent and at variance that the fact of the divine generation of Jesus depends?

S.—Certainly there is nothing else to cite in proof of the divinity of his parentage, unless it be involved in the circumstances of his history and acts when on earth.

The throne of David.

P.—Jesus, it appears, was to occupy the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob, and yet never had that position!

S.—Assuredly he had not. The idea is that it is a prediction remaining, in some way or other, to be fulfilled. Although Jesus gave out that his kingdom was not of this world, he held out to his disciples that "in the regeneration" he would "sit on the throne of his glory," when they also were to sit "upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28).

P.—The only certainty then at present is that the prediction has not been accomplished.

Jesus was to be the son of David, and that fact also is not made out.

S.—It is not. As on the father's side he came from the Holy Ghost, his connection with any human stock could only be through his mother; and here the alliance was with the tribe of Levi, not of Judah. It is through Joseph that the descent is sought to be maintained, but as he was not his father, Joseph affords no real link with David. Nor can the genealogies which would derive Joseph from David be depended on.

The genealogies.

P.—Will you be good enough to put these genealogies before me?

S.—These lists will enable you to compare the statements of the evangelists with one another, and with what appears in the Old Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT.		MATTHEW.	LUKE.
David		David	David
Solomon	Nathan	Solomon	Nathan
Rehoboam		Roboam	Mattatha
Abijah		Abia	Menan
Asa		Asa	Melea
Jehoshaphat		Josaphat	Eliakim
Jehoram		Joram	Jonan
Ahaziah			Joseph
Joash			Juda
Amaziah			Simeon
Uzziah		Ozias	Levi
Jotham		Joatham	Matthat
Ahaz		Achaz	Jorim
Hezekiah		Ezekias	Eliezer
Manasseh		Manasses	Jose
Ammon		Amon	Er
Josiah		Josias	Elmodam
			Cosam
Eliakim or Jehoiakim			
Jaconiah		Jachonia	Addi
			Melchi
			Neri
Salathiel		Salathiel	Salathiel
Pedaiah			
Zorobabel		Zorobabel	Zorobabel
		Abiud	Rhesa
		Eliakim	Joanna
		Azor	Juda
		Sadoc	Joseph
		Achim	Semei
		Eliud	Mattathias
		Eleazar	Maath
			Nagge
			Esli
			Naum
			Amos
			Mattathias
			Joseph
			Janna
			Melchi
			Levi
		Matthan	Matthat
		Jacob	Heli
		Joseph	Joseph
		Jesus	Jesus

You will observe that David had two sons, Solomon and Nathan. These were his children by Bathsheba, the wife he wrenched from Uriah. Matthew traces Joseph from Solomon, and Luke derives him from Nathan. This is a fatal divergence. The names and numbers of the descendants necessarily differ, the lines being distinct from the outset. Matthew has twenty-five generations between David and Joseph, and Luke has forty. Matthew has followed the genealogy in the Old Testament, as far as it goes, but with strange liberties in orthography; and he has been guilty of omissions, namely, of three persons between Jehoram and Uzziah, one between Josiah and Jeconiah, and one between Salathiel and Zorobabel. In deriving Jesus from Jaconiah he brings against him the ban of Jeremiah (xxii. 30), who declared that no man of his seed should prosper or sit upon the throne of David; whereby, as Matthew gives the descent, we have prophecy ranged against prophecy. Luke has had no prior genealogy that we know of to go by, and would seem to have made up one from his own imagination. The third name on his list is Mattatha. On this the changes are wrung,—Mattatha, Matthat, Mattathias, Maath, Mattathias, Matthat, as if to help out the list. In the same way names of the patriarchs, Joseph, Juda, Simeon, Levi; and Juda, Joseph, Semei (changed seemingly from Simeon), are clubbed together. Notwithstanding that the line of Luke is a totally dissimilar one from that given by Matthew, it is singular that he should fall into Matthew's line in certain parts. For example, he has with him Salathiel followed by Zorobabel, omitting, as Matthew has done, Pedaiah, who, according to the Old Testament, came between them, and he presents Matthat as Joseph's grandfather, which corresponds with Matthan as given by Matthew.

P.—How is it attempted to reconcile these genealogies?

S.—This has been a sore puzzle to all concerned in upholding the integrity of the gospels. The common explanation is, that the genealogy by Luke is really that of Mary, though she is unmentioned in it. The supposition is, for there is no evidence to the fact, that Heli, represented in Luke to be the father of Joseph, was really the father of Mary, and that as the Jews rank a son-in-law as a son, Joseph could be reckoned the son of Heli; whereby we have the strange anomaly of two very diverse genealogies, a legal and a natural one, ascribed to the same person. So far as respects the general difference between the two genealogies. The special discrepancies and objections I have above noticed have not been met, as far as I know; and there are other such difficulties. Matthew makes a fanciful division of his list into three sections of fourteen generations each. The first embraces from Abraham to David, both names included, but in attempting to bring the succeeding sections into uniformity in point of number, sundry errors occur. He has "the carrying away into Babylon" as the term for the second section. This is explained to have been in the time of Josias and his sons, "Jechonias and his brethren" (i. 11). The number of generations, again, turns out to be fourteen; namely from Solomon to Jechonia, both names inclusive, but this result is only obtained by the omission of four of the names appearing in the Old Testament list. The third section, from Salathiel to Jesus, both names inclusive, which should be of fourteen generations, consists of but thirteen, a blemish in his calculations which the writer might certainly have avoided had he thought of Pedaiah, standing in the ancient list between Salathiel and Zorobabel, whom he has omitted. Moreover from Rahab, Salmon's wife, to David, is four hundred years, during which, according to Luke, but four generations occur.

P. I must say these very serious discrepancies and errors stamp the writers, viewing them as mere human historians, as not trustworthy. I should be sorry if my own pedigree depended on such uncertain data. The object was to show Jesus to be born of the Holy Ghost, and at the same time a lineal descendant of David's, and this is met by putting forward certain genealogies of Joseph, with whom he was in no sense connected; genealogies, moreover, which in their discordance

contradict one another, and leave upon the mind the impression that they have been made up for a purpose.

Derivation of Jesus.

Is the derivation of Jesus from procreation by the Holy Ghost dwelt upon in other parts of these writings?

S. The fact is never again adverted to. Matthew and Luke speak of it no more, and it is nowhere referred to by Mark or John. Consequently it is never imputed to Jesus that he himself asserted that particular manner of derivation, though he did at times claim a divine origin. Peter, James, and Jude, were apostles, but they never mention the circumstance in their epistles; neither does Paul. Nor does it appear in the epistles and the Apocalypse which are ascribed to the apostle John.

P. That certainly is against the reality of the event. In what capacity was Jesus currently accepted as to his paternity?

S. He commonly passed as of human extraction, "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph" (Luke iii. 23). When his "gracious" utterances astonished the people, they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke iv. 22). "Whence," they asked, "hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 54-56; see also John i. 45; vi. 42).

P. His mother, Mary, at all events, could have told his real parentage. How was it that she disclosed it not?

S. That I cannot tell you. She had personally received the annunciation of the angel, and could witness in herself that Jesus had had no human father. An angel had appeared to shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus, and had told them that this was the expected Christ, or Messiah. After which "a multitude of the heavenly host" had suddenly appeared, ushering in his advent with praises to God; and all this they had immediately gone and declared to Joseph and Mary, and also published it abroad. The wise men, who came with offerings to the infant, had been inspired to recognise him as the Christ. Herod, moreover, being satisfied of his pretensions to be the future king of the Jews, had exterminated the young children born at that time, so as to put an end to him also. That, nevertheless, Jesus should be currently accounted

the son of Joseph, and that his mother should not have said a word to undeceive the people, and to advance her son's true pretensions, is no doubt marvellous in the extreme. But it is still more surprising that she herself retained no impression of his real character, but looked upon him, apparently, as an ordinary being. Forty days after the birth of Jesus, he was taken to the temple for the fulfilment of certain rites there. On his being brought in, Simeon, an aged man, to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost that he should not "see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ," at once recognised him as the hope of the world, "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel." Anna, a prophetess, did the like. And notwithstanding the angelic assurances which they had each received that this infant had sprung from a divine stock, "Joseph and his mother," it is said, "marvelled at those things which were spoken of him" (Luke ii. 21-33). On another occasion, when they went to the temple at the time that Jesus was twelve years of age, and had left the building, he remained behind and was found by them engaged in discussion with the doctors, or men of learning, with a degree of understanding that "astonished" all who heard him. Not recognizing his divine resources, Joseph and Mary were equally astonished with the rest. "And his mother," we are told, "said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them," we are informed, even after such an advertence as this to his divine origin (Luke ii. 41-50). On a third occasion, when Jesus was occupied in his ministry and engaged with a great multitude, "So that they could not so much as eat bread," his mother and his brothers concluded, for some cause, that he was "beside himself," and "went out to lay hold of him," utterly unconscious of his divinity and appointed work (Mark iii. 20, 21, 31).

P.—There appears to me but one way of accounting for such violence of all probability, namely, that these stories are destitute of any foundation in reality. On one occasion, I observe, Mary distinctly alludes to Joseph as the father. She

says to Jesus, "Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

Blemishes in lineage.

But assuming that Jesus was, as declared, begotten irrespectively of Joseph, would not his position, as one without a human father to point to, be that of illegitimacy? And, if so, how would that affect his standing in the eye of the Jewish law?

S.—"A bastard," it is said, "shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to his tenth generation" (Deut. xxiii. 2). Jesus was in the habit of going into the synagogue on the Sabbath days, and reading out publicly from the scriptures (Luke iv. 16), and he openly taught there and in the temple (John xviii. 20). If known to have been born out of wedlock, this would not have been permitted. How he got over the difficulty himself, seeing that he said he came not "to destroy, but to fulfil" the law, not "one jot or one tittle of which" was to be passed over (Matt. v. 17, 18), I am unable to explain.

P.—Jesus is derived also from a vitiated stock, according to the pedigree of Joseph, if he can properly be associated therewith, as one of his progenetrixes was the adulteress Bathsheba.

S.—That is not the only blemish. You will find in this pedigree other objectionable females; namely, Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah, and from their incestuous intercourse came Phares, from whom Joseph is derived. Rahab was a harlot of Jericho, that is of Gentile stock, with whom the Jews could not legally intermarry. And Ruth was a Moabitess, coming from Moab, the fruit of Lot's incest with his own daughter, and a Gentile line held in peculiar abomination (Deut. xxiii. 3).

P.—It seems extraordinary to associate one who was to see the law fulfilled in every tittle with so many transgressors of the law.

Estimate by Jesus of his mother.

In what sort of estimation did Jesus hold his mother, upon whom the Holy Ghost had conferred such great honour as to procreate a son from her?

S.—The angel who announced to her this intended honour addressed her in appropriate terms. "Hail," he said, "thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.—Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour of God." Jesus, however, appears to have held her in

little account, treating her with austerity or indifference. On an occasion, when he was told, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee," he replied, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!" (Matt. xii. 47-49). On another occasion, a woman exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." This might certainly have drawn out a declaration of his superhuman origin, but all he said was, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke xi. 27, 28). At the marriage feast, where he converted water into wine, his mother, evidently prepared in some unaccountable way for a miraculous display of his power, though hitherto he had wrought no miracle, said to him, "They have no wine;" on which he turned upon her roughly, and said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come" (John ii. 3, 4). And when he was on the cross, observing her and his favourite disciple present, he committed them one to the other, but in these cold and haughty terms, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother" (John xix. 26, 27).

P.—I certainly do not recognise here the meek and loving disposition I hear attributed to Jesus. His conduct seems to me to have been rude, and influenced by no small measure of pride and self-sufficiency, directed even towards his only earthly parent. Perhaps there is something in the Jewish law, every point in which he had to sustain, which, in inculcating relations with God, discountenanced sympathies with human relations.

S.—On the contrary; one of the ten commandments written with the finger of God on the tables of stone committed to Moses, was, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," which is specially re-enforced in the Christian dispensation as "the first commandment with promise" (Eph. vi. 2).

P.—These representations, as professing to be history, certainly teem with most extraordinary features. Will you be good enough to proceed with the narrative?

Narrative resumed.

S.—The birth place of Jesus was at Bethlehem, a circumstance that connected him with the predicted Messiah who was to be of the stock of David. Matthew introduces him there,

and recounting how Herod, when his birth as the king of the Jews was made known to him by the wise men, slaughtered all the infants in that neighbourhood, hoping to destroy Jesus among them, goes on to describe the flight of Joseph with his family to Egypt, and their return thence. He shows that they were going back to Judea, meaning thereby to Bethlehem, but were turned aside to Galilee, and so settled at Nazareth. Luke places the family originally in Nazareth, and brings them to Bethlehem for a special reason, namely, there to undergo taxation. Every one, he states, had to resort to his own city to be taxed, and Joseph, being of the line of David, had to appear for the purpose at the city of David, which was Bethlehem; and while they were thus there Jesus was born. Luke's further statement is that some forty days after the birth of Jesus, he was taken to the temple, on the occasion when Simeon and Anna publicly recognised him as the Messiah, after which the family returned to Nazareth.

With the exception of Jesus visiting the temple at the age of twelve, when he entered into a discussion with the doctors and astonished all by the powers of his understanding, as recounted by Luke, we hear no more of him till he entered upon his public ministry at the age of thirty. Here his history is taken up by the other two evangelists, Mark and John, also. His precursor John was then baptizing at the river Jordan, and thither Jesus repaired and was baptized by him. Then "the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Immediately after this Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, and "was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan." The evangelist John, however, has it that "the third day" after the descent upon him of the Holy Ghost, Jesus was at the marriage in Cana of Galilee where he changed the water into wine.

P.—If I understand you rightly, there is a discrepance as to whether Bethlehem or Nazareth was the fixed home of the parents of Jesus before his birth. I would ask you to open this out to me more distinctly.

Birth at Bethlehem.

S.—Matthew recounts Joseph's dream without saying where he was when it occurred. He goes on to describe the birth of

Jesus at Bethlehem, and it is presumable that this was the home of the family. Then there is the flight to Egypt. "Be thou there," the angel told Joseph, "until I bring thee word;" and when the word comes, it is in this form, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life." The injunction evidently was that they were to return to the spot from whence they had fled, that is to Bethlehem, and this could only have been because there was their home. Accordingly, they "came into the land of Israel," but finding a son of Herod's ruling there, Joseph "turned aside into the parts of Galilee." This is the first we hear of the family being in that region, and the account plainly leaves it to be understood that it was owing to this incident of their being so "turned aside" thither, that they established themselves in Galilee. "And he came," it is stated, "and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

Luke describes the annunciation to Mary to have occurred at Nazareth, so that the family are found there from the beginning. Then he makes them proceed to Bethlehem, specially, on account of the taxation, which was to embrace Mary as well as Joseph. He shows that there they had no home, but had recourse to an inn, and as "there was no room for them in the inn," the child had to be laid up "in a manger," so that the birth must have taken place in a stable. Matthew, however, consistently with his representation that Bethlehem was at the time the settled abode of the family, has it that the child was in a house, and it may be judged the one they usually inhabited. The wise men from the East find him there. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him." Being in this way at Bethlehem, they wait there, pursuant to Luke, till they had to visit the temple to make the prescribed sacrifice for the offspring when "the days" of Mary's "purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished." This was after the lapse of forty days from the birth (Lev. xii. 2-4). "And when," it is stated, "they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."

P.—In what light was Jesus looked upon when he embarked upon his mission as the Messiah, as from Bethlehem or from Nazareth?

S. Always as of Nazareth. He is so designated by the unclean spirit in the synagogue (Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34); when passing a blind man whom he restores to sight (Mark x. 47; Luke xviii. 37); and by the multitude who greet him when he made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 11). He is arrested under that designation (John xviii. 5, 7), and transferred by Pilate to Herod as soon as he heard he was of Galilee, and thus under Herod's jurisdiction (Luke xxiii. 6, 7). At the place of judgment, where Peter denies him, he is referred to as of Galilee and Nazareth (Matt. xxvi. 69, 71). He is described as of Nazareth in the label placed on his cross (John xix. 19); and is so adverted to by disciples who fell in with him at Emmaus after his resurrection (Luke xxiv. 19); and invariably so spoken of by his followers and opponents in after times (Acts ii. 22; iii. 6; iv. 10; vi. 14; x. 38). We have also his own testimony to the same effect, where, referring to this locality, he says, "a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mark vi. 1-4; Matt. xiii. 54, 57), expressions inconsistent with the idea that he, or his, could be traced to Bethlehem. Finally, an angelic messenger speaks of him at his tomb as of Nazareth (Mark xvi. 6); and he so proclaims himself from heaven when addressing Paul in the vision which effected his conversion (Acts xxii. 8). Nowhere is he associated with Bethlehem but in the accounts of his birth given by Matthew and Luke, save that Luke apparently has his own previous statement in mind as to the birth at Bethlehem, in a passage where he speaks of Nazareth as the place where Jesus "had been brought up" (Luke iv. 16). But there were occasions when, if the birth did take place at Bethlehem, the fact should have been brought out. Philip tells Nathanael, a devout man, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son," he represents, "of Joseph." Nathanael, evidently instructed in the prophecies concerning the Messiah, replies, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" To which Philip rejoins, "Come and see" (John i. 45, 46). Now if that "good," or

as elsewhere called "holy thing," had been the offspring of the Holy Ghost, here was a time for declaring the fact; and certainly Nathanael ought to have been assured that his birth had been at Bethlehem, as required by the exigency of the prophecy. But he is simply told, "Come and see;" that is, "Come and see that a good thing can be derived from Nazareth." The same question was raised on another occasion. Some said, "This is the Christ." Then it was asked, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him" (John vii. 41-43); and yet not a soul comes forward to satisfy the inquirers with a declaration of the birth at Bethlehem, and its wondrous and important adjuncts,—the heavenly hosts appearing to the shepherds, the star guiding the wise men, and the slaughter of the infants.

P.—There are then these two accounts of the birth at Bethlehem, consisting of details so discordant as to make them absolutely irreconcileable; and not only a want of support to such a fact in the remainder of these histories, but everything to contradict it. The taxation, which is said by Luke to have brought the family to Bethlehem, may possibly possess the features which should belong to it as an historical event.

The taxation.

S.—The measure is described by Josephus as resorted to solely for the estimation of property. The object would have been entirely defeated by the inhabitants transferring themselves from their usual places of abode to other quarters. The pretext, therefore, for the movement of the family from Nazareth to Bethlehem, given by Luke, could have no foundation in fact. Nor could the Roman Emperor exercise authority of this kind in the territories of an allied prince such as Herod, who, though he paid tribute to Rome, collected his own taxes. Consequently there could have been no such taxation under the orders of Cæsar Augustus in Judea, as declared by Luke, in the time the province continued under the rule of Herod.[1] The census of Cyrenius, or Quirinus, according to Josephus (Ant. xvii. xiii. 5, xviii. i. I., ii. I), did not take place until after the deposition of Archelaus, the son and successor of Herod (Matt. ii. 22), when Judea became a province of Rome,

[1] Giles' Christian Records, 121; English Life of Jesus, I. 50.

which was ten years after the death of Herod.[1] "It cannot have been," observes Strauss, "the census of Quirinus, for that did not take place until ten years later; it cannot have been one so much earlier, for nothing is known of anything of the sort, and it would be in contradiction to the circumstances; not a Roman census, for that could not have summoned a Galilean to Bethlehem; quite as little a Jewish registering, for on such an occasion, as on that of a Roman one, Mary might have stayed at home."[2] It is clear, therefore, that Luke's account of the family coming to Bethlehem to submit themselves to this census, or taxation, cannot be accepted as consistent with the true historical facts.

Witnesses unhistorical.

P.—Are there any historical characters among those who received or gave testimony to the advent of the Messiah at the time of his miraculous birth? The shepherds, to whom the angels appeared, are not named, and would probably be unknown even had they been so. Nor are the wise men, who were led by the star, specified, but being spoken of as renowned for wisdom, they should have been known characters. And then there are Simeon and Anna who recognised him in the temple.

S.—There is not a trace by which any of the parties can be identified so as to be ascertained to have been living personages. There is a Simeon, called Niger, spoken of in the Acts (xiii. 1; xv. 14), but this was forty-four years after the birth of Jesus, and he cannot have been the one in the temple, who was an aged man whose life had been specially prolonged that he might so see the Messiah; and Anna, the prophetess, is never heard of again. She also was then "of great age." She is said to have been the daughter of Phanuel, but who he was no one knows.

Slaughter of infants.

P.—In respect of Herod killing the young children, and the flight to Egypt by means of which Jesus escaped, what were the measures taken by Herod to secure Jesus? and how did John the Baptist, who was an infant at the time, avoid the peril?

S.—The wise men came to Jerusalem and went about asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we

[1] Giles' Christian Records, 120, 121; Renan's Life of Jesus, 46, note.
[2] New Life of Jesus, II. 28.

have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." On this the actual king, Herod, as well as "all Jerusalem," became troubled, and the chief priests and scribes were assembled, and asked in what place, according to prophecy, the Christ should be born. On this Bethlehem was indicated; upon which Herod sent for the wise men privately, and told them to go to Bethlehem and find out the child, and then to come and tell him of him, that he also might go and worship him. The wise men, however, being warned of God in a dream, did not fall into the snare, but went away without going near Herod again. Joseph, being in like manner warned in a dream, fled with his family to Egypt. Upon this the king, finding that he had been "mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under." No precautions are stated to have been taken in the case of the infant John. He may have been out of the range of the persecution.

P.—I must say I am unable to admire the wisdom of the wise men. It was an act of great imprudence to go to the capital of the existing king and openly and unguardedly inquire for the child who was to supplant him, or at all events his dynasty; and the least measure of discernment might have shown them that the king could not want to get at the child to worship him, without their requiring a special revelation from God to put them on their guard. But perhaps Herod was a man of such known benevolence and piety that no risk to the child at his hands was to be apprehended.

S. On the contrary, he was noted for his cruelties. "His domestic life was embittered by an almost uninterrupted series of injuries and cruel acts of vengeance. The terrible acts of bloodshed which Herod perpetrated in his own family, were accompanied by others among his subjects equally terrible, from the number who fell victims to them."[1]

P. The conduct of these men would lead me to call them the foolish men of the east, rather than the wise men. I cannot conceive why the star should have guided such persons as these on the mission described. They seem to have been brought to Jerusalem, which was not the true locality where

[1] Smith's Dict. of the Bible, Art. Herod.

the child was, just as it were for the mere purpose, through their egregious folly, of rousing the tyrant to fresh acts of bloodshed. Nor does the king appear to have taken the commonest precautions to secure his ends. With the whole resources of the kingdom at his command, why did he trust to the wise men, who were strangers to him, and from a foreign land, bringing him the intelligence about the child, without seeking for it himself? And how was it he did not even learn of the flight to Egypt, and so follow up the fugitives rather than exterminate the wrong infants who were not in his way? But perhaps Herod was as imbecile as the wise men.

S. No. He was a man of remarkable ability, and to distinguish him from others of the same name he is known in history as Herod the Great.

P.—Then I must needs charge the imbecility on the writer of the narrative, who puts together particulars too destitute of probability to pass for real facts. However, we appear to have in Herod an historic character. In the account of his misdeeds, is this slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem and its neighbourhood mentioned?

S.—The event was certainly of a character to attract the attention of an historian, but it is unnoticed by any. Josephus, for example, "though he devoted a considerable portion of his history to the reign of Herod, and does not spare his reputation," makes no mention of this atrocity.[1]

P.—If there was this risk for the infant from Herod, how could he have been taken to the temple forty days after his birth, and there proclaimed openly as the Messiah, without drawing down the danger?

S.—I am unable to say.

P.—And if, after thus visiting the temple, the family immediately went away to Nazareth, as narrated by Luke, how could they have fled to Egypt, waited there till the death of Herod, and then resorted to Nazareth, without going near Jerusalem or the temple?

S.—On this no proper explanation can be given. The statements are so discordant that if you receive the one you must reject the other.

P.—Can you account for the introduction in Matthew of

[1] Greg's Creed of Christendom, 92.

this evidently unhistorical narrative respecting Herod's slaughter of the children?

S.—Matthew makes numerous efforts at establishing the title of Jesus to be accepted as the Messiah, by applying passages to him from the Old Testament to which he gives prophetic import. He does so on the present occasion, saying that the return from Egypt fulfilled what Hosea had said, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." The flight into Egypt gave thus the needed occasion for bringing Jesus again out of Egypt. At the time of the birth of Moses, Pharaoh slaughtered the Israelitish infants, and Moses, in a remarkable way, escaped, and this may have suggested the similar action attributed to Herod, with the corresponding escape of Jesus.

Period of birth of Jesus.

P.—Are there data for ascertaining the time when Jesus was born?

S.—He is stated to have "began to be about thirty years of age," "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar" (Luke iii. 1, 23). That implies that he was born fifteen years before the death of the previous emperor Augustus.

P.—How does that date consort with the facts of the history?

S. Not at all. It has been discovered from history "that at the time fixed on for the birth of Christ, king Herod the Great had been dead nearly four years," so that either "the history of Christ's persecution by Herod the Great is fictitious, or else, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Jesus began to be—not about *thirty* but about thirty-four years of age."[1]

P.—So that Matthew's narrative respecting the wise men, the persecution of Herod, and the flight to Egypt, is found to be as unhistorical as the taxation spoken of by Luke!

Adolescence of Jesus.

You say that between the birth of Jesus and the commencement of his public ministry, thirty years afterwards, there is nothing recorded of him but a visit he paid with his parents to the temple at the age of twelve. This dearth of material reminds me very much of the history of the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness, where we have ample details about them at the outset, and then little or nothing said about them till the close of their pilgrimage, forty years later. They are histories with beginnings and ends and no

[1] Giles' Christian Records, 123.

body, giving them a very unreal aspect. It would have been interesting to know how the God-child developed into the God-man, and what his training and occupation in the hands of earthly parents might have been.

S.—All that we are told is that he resided with his parents "and was subject unto them, and increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man" (Luke ii. 51, 52); and he is referred to as "the carpenter, the son of Mary" (Mark vi. 3), which supports the statement you will remember I told you is made by Justin Martyr, that he worked as one in the construction of ploughs and other agricultural implements.[1]

P.—I must say that this places Jesus before us in the light of a mere human being. It was a poor sort of introduction to the God-like rôle he had afterwards to play. Could his parents have been satisfied of his divine origin, and yet have put him to such servile occupation? How, moreover, can a divine being, who must ever have been perfect, be found increasing in wisdom and favour with God as one that had to be perfected?

Relations with John.

What were his relations with his precursor John the Baptist?

S.—The mothers of the two were cousins, and the birth of each had been announced in a similar manner by the angel Gabriel. The one was to prepare the way for the other. As soon as the angel had quitted Mary, she went and visited Elizabeth, and at her approach the fœtus in the womb of the latter leapt with joy in recognition of the mother of the Lord. Thus deep laid was the association between the two. Their career began at the same time, namely in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar (Luke iii. 1-3, 23). As Jesus was about to enter on his mission, and before they had met in what may be called their official capacities, John shows full knowledge of his fellow-worker. When people were wondering whether John was the Christ, he repudiated the idea, and pointed to the coming of the one mightier than himself, whose baptism was to be with the Holy Ghost, and who was to "gather the wheat into his garner," but to burn up the "chaff, with fire unquenchable" (Luke iii. 15-17). Jesus then presents himself to John for baptism, and after he had undergone the rite, "the heavens were opened" and "the Spirit of God" was seen "descending like a dove and lighting upon him," and then there came "a

[1] Ante, p. 33.

voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." But the accounts differ, where no disagreement could be expected, in view of the previous connection between the parties; namely, as to whether John knew who Jesus was when he came to him for baptism. According to Matthew (iii. 14), John, who had just proclaimed his advent, recognised him, evidently as the Christ, and forbade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" According to John (i. 32-34), the Baptist did not know him, and the Christ had to be pointed out to him. "I saw," says the Baptist, "the Spirit of God descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw," adds John, "and bare record that this is the Son of God."

P.—The voice from heaven would of course be an unmistakeable manifestation, but I cannot make out what was to be understood by a bird descending and alighting on Jesus. How was it to be known that this bird was the Holy Ghost?

S.—That I cannot tell you.

P.—The discrepance in the two accounts as to whether John knew who Jesus was when he came to be baptized is certainly very marked, but after the divine recognition of Jesus as the Son of God at the time of his baptism, John should have been in no further difficulty; and yet, as you have shown before, when Jesus was giving still further manifestation of his divinity in healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead, John, it appears, was in doubt, and sent some of his disciples to know whether Jesus was really the expected Christ or not!

S.—Certainly John's need for making the inquiry is altogether inexplicable, consistently with the ample means of recognition he is said already to have had.

P.—And there is also the ignorance of those disciples of John whom Paul re-baptized. John was the appointed forerunner of the Christ, and surely he should have proclaimed Jesus as such, especially after the divine recognition of Jesus he had witnessed at the time of his baptism.

S.—John did so proclaim him. When he saw him at the

time of his baptism, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And meeting him again the next day, he exclaimed to two of his own disciples who were with him, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John i. 29, 35-37).

P.—We seem ever involved in a sea of inconsistencies.

The temptation.

I notice another very serious one in the narrative of the events at this stage of the history which you have given me, namely, that it would appear, according to one evangelist, that immediately after his baptism Jesus was occupied for forty days with his temptation by the devil, and, according to another, that three days subsequently to the baptism he was performing the miracle of turning the water into wine.

S.—It is so certainly. The language used is very clear. "And there came a voice from heaven," it is said in relating the baptism, "saying, Thou art my Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan" (Mark i. 11-13). In the conflicting account the days there in question are carefully indicated. John is asked whether he is the Christ, and he disclaims the position (John i. 15-28). "The next day" the baptism of Jesus occurs (i. 29-34). "Again the next day" he proclaims Jesus to two of his disciples as the Lamb of God, and they follow Jesus to his place of residence (i. 35-42). "The day following Nathanael is met with, and makes his inquiry whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth (i. 43-51). And then the next chapter opens with, "And the third day" (more accurately the fifth day), "there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," after which the account comes of the miracle. If then on the third day after his baptism in Jordan Jesus is found to be in Galilee, it is clear that the statement that immediately after his baptism he passed forty days in the wilderness of Judea, cannot be maintained.

P.—As usual, we have two accounts which conflict so much as to destroy one another.

The apostles.

Will you tell me about the apostles, who appear to have been the constant attendants of Jesus, and I presume coadjutors in his ministry.

S.—They were to be twelve in number, corresponding with

the twelve tribes of Israel. For example, Jesus declared to them, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). And the heavenly Jerusalem is to have twelve gates, on which are to be inscribed "the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel," and the wall of the city, had twelve foundations, "and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 12, 14).

P.—Are these names all clear and apparent?

S.—That is not the case. In the first place, though the patriarch Jacob had exactly the twelve sons, from whom the tribes of Israel are derived, one of them, Joseph, became represented in his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim, so that the tribes actually became thirteen. In regard to the apostles the difficulties are even greater. The names of the twelve selected by Jesus are given by the first three evangelists, but they are not in accord with each other, as to one of the number. Mark (iii. 18) calls him Thaddæus. Matthew (x. 3) says he was Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus, but Dr Giles declares the latter words as to the surname to be an interpolation, as they do not appear in the early manuscripts.[1] Dr Smith also says of the passage that "Lebbæus is probably the original reading,"[2] a statement which apparently excludes Thaddæus. Luke (vi. 16) calls this apostle Judas, stating him to be of James, which, according to rule, would mean the son of James; but as there is a Jude, the writer of one of the so-called apostolic epistles, who is described as the "brother of James," our translators have represented this apostle Judas to be such. Dr Smith has, no doubt, felt the difficulty of reconciling these names, as he concludes, without however having authority to support him, that they were all "borne by one and the same person." Taking matters, however, simply, as they appear in the gospels, we find the three writers, who give the names of the apostles, all in agreement as to those of eleven of them, and all at issue as to that of the remaining apostle.

Then there is the difficulty in regard to Judas Iscariot. In giving the names of the apostles, the evangelists are careful to

[1] Christian Records, 147, note. [2] Dict. of Bible, Art. Thaddæus.

point out that he was the one who betrayed Jesus. He did so with a kiss, for a paltry sum of money, after which he met with an untimely end in judgment for his iniquity. Peter, in the first assembly held after the death of Jesus, proposed to elect a substitute, applying a passage in one of the Psalms to signify that Judas had been deposed, and that "another" was to "take his bishopric." They thereupon selected two, Barnabas and Matthias, as qualified for the post of apostle, having been in company with the others through the whole period of the public career of Jesus, from his baptism to his resurrection, and they committed it to the Lord to decide, by lot, which of the two should be chosen. "And the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts i. 15-26). Thus there were actually thirteen apostles, but one came in in succession to one deposed.

Furthermore, Paul, everywhere throughout his epistles, declares himself to be an apostle. He states he was "called to be an apostle" (Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1), and "ordained" and "appointed" as such (1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11). One requisition for the office was that the individual should have been with Jesus throughout his ministry. This qualification Paul certainly had not, but he lays claim to what he represents as its equivalent. "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen the Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1), evidently referring to the vision he had had of Jesus at the time of his conversion. In this way he associates himself with the body of the apostles. "I think," he said, "that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death" (1 Cor. iv. 9); and he speaks of the others as having been "apostles before him" (Gal. i. 17), at one time calling himself "the least" of the number (1 Cor. xv. 9), and at another, "not a whit behind the very chiefest" of them (2 Cor. xi. 5). In this manner there were fourteen apostles.

P.—Had Judas, the traitor, the same power and privileges with the rest of the apostles while of the body? That is, was he authorised to perform miracles, and to publish the doctrines then promulgated?

S.—Certainly: he was empowered and used as the other apostles. "For," they testify of him, "he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry" (Acts i. 17).

P.—Then to him also, equally as to the other eleven, the promise of Jesus was personally made, that he should sit on one of the twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel.

S.—Assuredly he was one of the twelve to whom this promise was addressed.

P.—And how, with fourteen persons to deal with, and the name of one of the original apostles absolutely uncertain, is the inscription of the twelve names on the foundations of the wall of the heavenly Jerusalem to be carried out?

S.—It would take a wiser person than either you or I to decide that.

P.—Are there any incidents recorded of the circumstances under which any of the original apostles were called upon to follow Jesus?

Call of Matthew.

S.—There are; but the accounts are very discordant. There is the call of Matthew. He, in the list given in the gospel bearing his name, is designated "Matthew the publican," and is said (Matt. ix. 9) to have been found by Jesus "sitting at the receipt of custom" in exercise of his vocation. Jesus said to him, "Follow me," and he at once "arose and followed him." Jesus, then, is entertained in a house in company with "many publicans and sinners." Mark (ii. 14), and Luke (v. 27), say that the person so called was Levi, and that it was at his house that the entertainment was given. The name of Levi is not among those of the selected twelve; so that this man was an undistinguished disciple, and not one of the apostles.

Call of Peter and Andrew, and James and John.

There were two pairs of brothers among the apostles, namely, Peter and Andrew, and James and John. According to Matthew (iv. 18-22), when Jesus was "walking by the sea of Galilee," he saw Peter and Andrew "casting a net into the sea," and on calling to them to follow him, "they straightway left their nets, and followed him." "And going on from thence," he saw James and John "in a ship, with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." Mark's account agrees with this, but that of Luke differs. The locality is the same, namely, "the lake of Gennesaret;" but the circumstances vary. Jesus, it is said, "saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone

out of them, and were washing their nets." The four were thus all together and occupied in the same manner, but not in either of the ways spoken of by Matthew and Mark. Jesus "entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship." Simon, it appears, and others, must have entered the vessel with Jesus; for he says to Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught;—and when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners," who by this time "were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." Peter, and those who were with him, were astonished. "And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon (Peter)." Jesus says to Peter, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men;" on which, "when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him" (Luke v. 1-11). Andrew is not mentioned in this narrative; but it may be assumed that he was one of those with Peter. The account in John is altogether different from any of the above. The scene is here laid in Judea, near the Jordan, where John the Baptist was baptising. The day after he had baptised Jesus, he proclaimed him, as I have before stated, to be the Lamb of God. John had then with him two of his own disciples who heard what he had said, "and they followed Jesus." Jesus takes them to his abode. "And one of the two," we are told, "which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus" (John i. 35-42). In this manner Peter and Andrew were gained over. The call of the other couple, James and John, is not given by this evangelist, and his narrative in fact excludes their presence, as he passes on to show how Philip and one Nathanael were brought in.

P.—Certainly, if these evangelists had designed to contradict one another, they could hardly have done so more effectually. Luke, I observe, introduces a miraculous draught of

fishes, but, as usual with the reciters of marvels, he falls into inconsistencies. If the net broke while they were hauling it in, how is it that the fish did not escape? And is it conceivable that practised boatmen, as they were, would have filled their vessels with fish to a point to bring them to sinking?

The seventy.

There was another select body of seventy who were sent out to work miracles. Who were they?

S.—No one knows. Their names are nowhere mentioned. Luke alone speaks of them.

P.—Can his introduction of this body be traced to any cause?

S.—None can be suggested but that he may have been taking Moses's act in supporting himself with seventy elders (Ex. xxiv. 1, 9) as a type. Both twelve and seventy are numbers so frequently employed in Hebraic representations as to show they were considered mystical or sacred numbers.

P.—What became of the apostles? and what evidence have they left behind them of their personal reality?

The end of Judas.

S.—The end of Judas Iscariot is related, but certainly in different ways. He received thirty pieces of silver from the chief priests as the price of his treachery. Matthew (xxvii. 3-8) says that when he saw the consequences of his act, he was overwhelmed with remorse, "and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." The reply of the priests is stated to have been, "What is that to us? see thou to that." On which the unhappy man "cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." The chief priests considered it unlawful to put the money into the treasury, as it was "the price of blood," and therefore laid it out in the purchase of a field, which became known as "The field of blood." In the Acts (i. 18, 19), the representation is that Judas appropriated the money, and expended it himself in the purchase of the field, and came by his death in a different way, apparently through an accident. "Now this man," it is said, "purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." And it would seem that it was owing to this catastrophe, namely to the blood of Judas spilled thereon, and not to the blood of

Jesus sold for the purchase money, that the field received its appellation. "And it (what befel Judas,) was known," it is added, "unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; *insomuch* as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood."

Paul seems to have known nothing of the ejection and death of Judas, for while the evangelists are careful to point out that the appearances of Jesus after death were made to the eleven, the place of Judas being then vacant, Paul has it that he showed himself to the twelve (1 Cor. xv. 5). The election of Matthias, it must be observed, did not occur till after the ascension.

Fate of the other apostles.

The fate of the other apostles is altogether obscure. They have passed away, for the most part, without having left any trace behind them of their works or even existence. One John, who may possibly be the apostle John, though that is not certain, is spoken of by Irenæus as known to Polycarp, whom Irenæus saw in his own boyhood about fifty years before he wrote.[1] As to the rest, they may, as far as evidence to reality goes, be purely mythical characters.[2] Two of the gospels are called after the names of two of them, but unwarrantably so. There are two epistles attributed to Peter, of which one is considered spurious. And there are three epistles and the Apocalypse ascribed to John, of which all but one epistle are called in question. The real task of developing the doctrine of Jesus fell upon Paul, who, in spite of his pretensions, cannot be looked upon as otherwise than a self-constituted teacher.

Character of the dispensation.

P.—What was the character of the dispensation in the lifetime of Jesus? Was it strictly Jewish, or open and unexclusive, as is the Christian dispensation?

S.—Apparently the dispensation remained Jewish without alteration till changed by the death of Jesus. He said he had come, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law, no jot or tittle of which was to be unobserved (Matt. v. 17, 18). In his own person he underwent circumcision, and the prescribed offering was made for him in the temple in redemption of him as a first-born (Luke ii. 21-24). He kept the passover (Matt.

[1] Dr Davidson in Theo. Review, No. XXX. 299, 302.

[2] See two pamphlets on "The Twelve Apostles," in the series of Mr Thos. Scott of Ramsgate.

xxvi. 18), and the feasts of tabernacles and dedication (John vii. 2, 10 ; x. 22), and purified the temple (Matt. xxi. 12, 13), and on curing at one time one leper, and at another ten, he told them all to go and show themselves to the priest, and make their offering as Moses had commanded (Luke v. 14 ; xvii. 14). But he, nevertheless, discountenanced, or annulled, the law of Moses, on several occasions. He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but," he added, "I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." And he went on in the same manner. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies" (Matt. v..33-44). Then there was the law about clean or unclean animals for food, which he equally set at nought. "Not that," he declared, "which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth" (referring to the expression of evil thoughts), "this defileth a man" (Matt. xv. 11). The law of Moses allowed of arbitrary divorcements. A man might put away his wife if there was anything about her to make her lose "favour in his sight" (Deut. xxiv. 1). Jesus referred to this, and said, as from himself, that there could be no divorce except for infidelity (Matt. xix. 3-9). He even encouraged eunuchism (Matt. xix. 10-12), which entailed exclusion from all religious communion (Deut. xxiii. 1). And when a woman taken in adultery was brought before him, the penal consequence of whose act was death, he put an end to the possibility of executing that, or any other law, by requiring that the executioners should be themselves free of all taint of sin of any sort. "Neither," added he, when no one could take up a stone to throw at her under such a limitation as that, "do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more" (John viii. 3-11). In fulfilment of a supposed prophecy he was to be a Nazarene (Matt. ii. 23), meaning, as some suggest, that he was to be a Nazarite, or one who had devoted himself to God. But, if so, he broke the law of the Nazarite (Num. vi. 2-6) in two respects ; namely, in drinking wine (Matt. xi. 19), and in touching a dead body (Matt. ix. 25). "Salvation," it was understood, was confined to the Jews, with whom was the only place of worship which God could acknowledge (John iv. 20-22). In recognition of

their exclusive position as the people of God, when he sent out the apostles to preach, he restricted them to ministering among them. "Go not," he said, "into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6). And when a woman of Canaan came to entreat him for her daughter, who was possessed with a devil, he repelled her, saying, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," finally yielding to her repeated solicitation, to the abandonment, be it observed, of his own proclaimed principle (Matt. xv. 22-28). At another time, however, he appears to have had no such scruples, when a Roman centurion appealed to him in behalf of his palsied servant, on which occasion he put the applicant on a higher level than the privileged Israelites (Matt. viii. 5-13). And notwithstanding his positive instructions to the apostles not to enter into any city of Samaria, or to minister among that people, he had no difficulty, apparently, in transgressing his own rule himself. There are two accounts of his progress from Galilee to Jerusalem, not in accord as to the time when the journey was made, but agreeing that his course lay through Samaria. According to John, he then went "to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar," and falling in with a woman of the place at a well, revealed himself to her as the Messiah, and through this channel "many of the Samaritans of that city" accepted him as such ; and, at their request, "he abode there two days," when many more were brought to believe in him (John iv. 3-42). According to Luke, he had "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," and "sent messengers" who "entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him." These people would not receive him, upon which "they went to another village," presumedly in the same region (Luke ix. 51-56). In this way "he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee," and "as he entered a certain village," ten lepers appealed to him for help. These he cured, and one of them, we are told, "was a Samaritan" (Luke xvii. 11-16). Furthermore, the wise men from the East who honoured him with gifts at his birth were apparently Gentiles ; the prominent scene of his ministry was a region so peopled with this race as to be known as Galilee of the Gentiles, and Gadara, where he wrought a notable miracle, was a locality chiefly Gentile.

P.—If the laws enjoined on the Jews were divine, and to be respected as such, what could be thought of a teacher who, coming among them with the avowal that these laws were to be maintained in every point, yet openly set them aside, and substituted for them rules shaped according to his better sense of what the conduct of mankind should be? What was this but to set up free-will in lieu of law, and so to unsettle, and do away with, every restraint? And to whatever extent Jesus maintained the Jewish pretensions to exclusive communion with God, he warred against the actual truth, to man's loss, and God's dishonour. Here also his practice and his profession were not in accord, and the whole character of these representations impresses us with the idea of the instability of the personage described. And yet he is to be viewed, not merely as a God-appointed teacher, but as himself Divine! I see no conclusion remaining to be drawn but that this is an ideal history, with the defects inherent to such an attempt, especially as made in an uncritical and ignorant age.

Purification of the temple.

You have said that he purified the temple. What are the circumstances?

S.—Jesus, on visiting the temple, found in it "those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables (John ii. 14, 15); and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple" (Mark xi. 16). According to John, this happened at the beginning of his ministry, and according to the other evangelists at its close.

P.—How did the sacred edifice come to be thus desecrated?

S.—The traffic in question grew out of the necessities of the temple worship. The animals exposed for sale were required for the sacrifices.

P.—How was the interference submitted to?

S.—Apparently without remonstrance from those so ejected.

P.—Do you mean to say that one man could act thus with violence towards a number of others, even to the extent of administering flagellation, and put an end to their business, with its attendant gains, and yet meet with no opposition,—the business, moreover, being one associated with their religious services?

S.—So the story is told.

P.—Was the process effectual?

S.—What the ultimate results were we are not told. According to John, Jesus frequently revisited the temple, and to be consistent should have interfered again if the practice he had objected to still subsisted. But we hear of no further action of the sort on his part. The accounts of the other evangelists are at entire variance with that of John, for, according to them, the practice was in force at the close of the ministry of Jesus, and was then put down by him, under circumstances to show that he had never taken such action before.

P.—This is a strange discrepancy certainly, if there is any real foundation for the story. Was it consistent with the doctrine Jesus held forth, that a man should take the law into his own hands, and put down by violence what he might disapprove of?

S.—On the contrary, he taught just the reverse. He said of himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. xi. 29), and he declared, "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the meek." "Resist not evil," he said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. v. 3, 5, 39, 40).

P.—His practice and his preaching seem to have been highly inconsistent. Was this open interference with what stood connected with the temple sacrifices alleged against him when he was finally proceeded against?

S.—His accusers seem to have been at their wits' end to bring matter against him, but no one appears to have thought of this very remarkable handle which might have been used to his prejudice.

P.—The tale has assuredly the characteristics of fiction throughout. Does the contradiction as to whether the event happened at the beginning or the end of the ministry of Jesus involve any serious discordance as to time?

Duration of ministry.

S.—It does. The first three evangelists record the occurrence of but one passover during the ministry of Jesus, namely that at which his career was brought to a close. John, on the

other hand, has him officiating through a period embraced by three passovers (ii. 13, 23; vi. 4; xi. 55). So that according to the first three the ministry of Jesus lasted but a portion of a year, while pursuant to John it occupied more than two years.

P.—Would you be good enough to give me an idea of the movements of Jesus in the course of his career, pointing out where the accounts disagree.

S.—Willingly. This map will enable you to follow me in my statements.

Recapitulation of discrepancies in early history.

I have already mentioned to you certain serious differences between the evangelists in the early part of the history of Jesus. That is, Matthew has his parents residing at Bethlehem at the time of his birth, while Luke brings them there specially for a census from Nazareth, which he represents as their place of abode. Then Matthew has them flying with Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt, and returning thence to Nazareth; whereas Luke says they went direct from Bethlehem to Nazareth, the flight to Egypt, and its cause having no place in his narrative. I have shown you that Luke brings Jesus to Jerusalem at the age of twelve in company with his parents for the passover, a circumstance not mentioned by the other evangelists. Furthermore, the first three evangelists describe the meeting of Jesus with John, his baptism by John, the descent upon him of the Holy Ghost with a voice from heaven, and his immediately being taken to the wilderness of Judea, where he remained forty days tempted of the devil. The fourth evangelist, on the other hand, mentions the meeting with John, and the divine manifestations, but says nothing of the baptism of Jesus; and three days after this meeting he places Jesus at Cana in Galilee, where he performs the miracle of changing water into wine. John thus excludes the temptation, while the other evangelists exclude the miracle at Cana.

We are brought now to the period of the public ministry of Jesus.

Field of ministry.

Matthew says that after his temptation Jesus returned to Galilee (iv. 12); then proceeded from Nazareth to Capernaum (iv. 13); then went preaching through all Galilee (iv. 23); afterwards ascended a mountain, and gave forth that discourse currently called his sermon on the mount (v. 1); then entered

Capernaum (viii. 5); was on the sea of Galilee in a storm (viii. 24); visited the country of the Gergesenes (viii. 28); returned to Nazareth, where he performed a noted miracle on a man sick of the palsy (ix. 1); went through the cities and villages round about (ix. 35); preached in the cities (xi. 1); upbraided those in which he had most worked, naming Chorazin and Bethsaida (xi. 21); was by the sea side (xiii. 1); returned to Nazareth (xiii. 54); on hearing of John's death withdrew by ship to a desert place (xiv. 13); crossed the sea to the other side (xiv. 22); was again on the sea and landed at Gennesaret (xiv. 34); went to the border of Tyre and Sidon (xv. 21); came back to the sea of Galilee (xv. 29); went by ship to the coast of Magdala (xv. 39); crossed to the other side (xvi. 5); went to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi (xvi. 13); ascended the mount where he was transfigured, having Moses and Elias with him (xvii. 1); was still in Galilee (xvii. 22); went to Capernaum (xvii. 24); and then set out on his journey to Jerusalem where he met his end (xix. 1).

Mark and Luke describe the same course in very general concurrence with Matthew, the details in Mark being the fullest and closest in accord. Mark, however, places the curing of the palsied man at Capernaum, on the second visit made to that place (ii. 1), and Luke does not say where it occurred, Jesus being last spoken of by him as in the wilderness (v. 16-18). Luke, moreover, says that what is known as the sermon on the mount was delivered on a plain to which Jesus descended from a mountain (vi. 17), and he places the event after the curing of the palsied man.

These evangelists thus concur in confining the ministrations of Jesus to Galilee, not bringing him to Judea or Jerusalem till he comes there at the close of his career. John's account is a very different one. Having taken Jesus to Cana of Galilee (ii. 1), he states that he went to Capernaum (ii. 12), and then attended the passover at Jerusalem (ii. 13). There is now a new episode connected with John. He is found baptizing at Ænon, on the Jordan, the point where he first baptized being lower down, at Bethabara; and to this neighbourhood, which is in Samaria, Jesus comes and carries out the rite, baptizing, through the instrumentality of his disciples, more

persons than John. John, it is pointed out, had "not yet" been "cast into prison" (iii. 22-24; iv. 1, 2). Pursuant to the other evangelists, the ministry of Jesus did not begin till after John had been thrown into prison, nor do they attribute to him the dispensing of baptism. But the fourth evangelist, as we see, has him enacting a miracle in Galilee, and surrounded by disciples, before John's ministrations had been brought to a close by his incarceration. After this Jesus, according to John, left Judea for Galilee (iv. 3), and then visited Sychar in Samaria, where he obtained many adherents (iv. 5), a fact unmentioned in the other gospels. He again returns to Galilee (iv. 43), and revisits Cana (iv. 46). After this he proceeds a second time to attend a feast at Jerusalem (v. 1), and is found afterwards on the sea of Galilee (vi. 1). The second passover is then said to be near at hand, but we are not told whether he presented himself at it (vi. 4). We hear of him next on a mountain (vi. 15), and then as crossing the sea to Capernaum (vi. 17). Afterwards, he is still teaching at Capernaum (vi. 59), and then moves about in Galilee (vii. 1). For the third time he visits Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles (vii. 10), is seen on the mount of Olives (viii. 1), and resorts to the temple (viii. 2), and is still at Jerusalem in winter at the feast of dedication (x. 22). Nor is he elsewhere than in Judea till his death.

Matthew and Luke certainly attribute a speech to Jesus which could not consistently have been uttered unless his ministrations in Jerusalem had been frequent. At his final visit he is said to have exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem—how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34); but for any such attempts, unless remote and indirect, and made at a distance in Galilee, they do not leave an opening. They profess to record the whole history of the ministry of Jesus, and account for him from place to place till he finally suffered at Jerusalem, and as they never bring him into Judea till he there came to his end, their narratives exclude any intermediate operations in Jerusalem, and render it difficult to believe that he could have uttered the words here imputed to him. It is a speech, possibly, presented for effect, and to afford a link between

Jesus and what should have been the prominent scene of his mission as the Jewish Messiah.

It remains impossible to reconcile these respective accounts. All have the same starting point for the ministry of Jesus, namely the time that he met with John baptizing in Jordan. The first three evangelists place him thenceforth in Galilee, till the approach of the passover which brought him to Jerusalem, where he suffered, the whole period embracing but a portion of a year. John, on the other hand, records two prior journeys from Galilee to Jerusalem, for which the other evangelists have no place, extends his ministry over three passovers, and brings him finally to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, which was held in the month of Tisri, or October, accounting for him there to his last passover, held in Nisan, or April.[1] And it is during these six months, from October to April, that the other evangelists report him as in Galilee, the period embracing the chief portion of the labours they had to record.

Final journey to Jerusalem.

Nor is there agreement among the first three evangelists as to the journey from Galilee to attend the last passover at Jerusalem. Pursuant to Matthew (xix. 1), it was taken by "the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan," and according to Mark (x. 1) "by the farther side of Jordan." That is, Jesus left Galilee by crossing the Jordan, kept along its eastern bank, and then recrossed into Judea without passing through Samaria. But the statement of Luke is, that as he "set his face to go to Jerusalem," he sent messengers before him to prepare for him, and these "entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him" (ix. 51, 52); and he goes on to say that "as he went to Jerusalem," "he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee" (xvii. 11).

Ensuing events.

The discrepancies prevail to the end of these narratives. The last stage, according to the first three gospels, was from Jericho to Jerusalem, through Bethany, which was accomplished in one day (Matt. xx. 29; xxi. 1; Mark x. 46; xi. 1; Luke xix. 1, 29). Near Jericho Jesus performed a cure of blindness. Luke (xviii. 35) says that this was wrought upon one man who was sitting by the wayside begging, and that this was as they approached Jericho. Mark (x. 46) says that it was on one man so sitting as they were leaving the place. Matthew (xx.

[1] Smith's Dict., Articles, Month, Feast of Tabernacles, and Passover.

29) also says it was as they were leaving Jericho, but represents that there were two blind men whose sight was restored on the occasion. The entry into Jerusalem is made with parade upon an ass, obtained in passing at Bethany. According to Matthew and Luke, Jesus then purged the temple of the money changers (Matt. xxi. 12-16; Luke xix. 45, 46), but Mark observes that when he entered the temple he merely looked about him, as a man might do who was a stranger to the place, and withdrew, the time being the evening; and he says that the purging of the temple occurred the following day (xi. 11-16). Matthew and Mark agree that Jesus lodged that night at Bethany (Matt. xxi. 17; Mark xi. 11). Matthew says that the following morning, on his way to the city, he cursed the fig tree, which immediately withered away (xxi. 18-20). Mark has it that it was not till the succeeding morning that the tree was seen to be withered (xi. 14, 19, 20), and he places the purification of the temple after the act of the cursing. Matthew goes on to show that on the day Jesus cursed the fig-tree, being the day after he had reached Jerusalem, he held various discourses in the temple and on the mount of Olives, and that then it wanted two days to the passover (xxi. 23; xxii. 23; xxiv. 1, 3; xxvi. 1). Mark gives these discourses as occurring a day later, his account of the withering of the fig-tree having introduced an additional day. So that Matthew places the arrival of Jesus from Galilee three days before the passover, and Mark four days. Luke does not enable us to reckon the days, nor does he say that Jesus returned to Bethany. He tells us that "he taught daily in the temple," and speaks indefinitely of "one of those days, as he taught," and mentions that "in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives" (xix. 47; xx. 1; xxi. 37). Matthew and Mark proceed to say that when in a certain house in Bethany, a woman came in and anointed him (Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9), but Luke places the incident in the early part of the ministry of Jesus while he was in Galilee (vii. 36-48.) The three evangelists agree that Jesus kept the passover with the apostles, was arrested the same night, and executed the following day.

The narrative of John is altogether independent and diverse.

He has Jesus in Judea, not merely three, or it may be four days before the passover, as stated by Matthew and Mark, but six months, as I have already mentioned. As the end draws near, we find him "where John at first baptized; and there he abode" (x. 40), that is, at Bethabara on the Jordan. There Martha and Mary send for him when Lazarus is ill. He remains where he was for two days and then goes to them at Bethany. By that time we are told Lazarus had been dead four days. Jesus restores him to life, and then withdraws to a place called Ephraim near the wilderness. "Six days before the passover" Jesus returns to Bethany, where his anointing takes place. From the time of the raising of Lazarus, the chief priests and the Pharisees, we learn, "took counsel together for to put him to death." The miracle had brought many to believe on Jesus, and when they heard he was coming to the feast, numbers, with palm branches in their hands, went forth to greet him as the King of Israel. It was on this occasion that he made his entry on the ass. He now asks God to glorify his name, and "then came there a voice from heaven" in response to his prayer. After this we hear that Jesus "departed, and did hide himself" (xii. 36). The day preceding the passover he had what is called his last supper with the apostles, and the following day he suffered. The scene of purging the temple John lays at the time of the earliest of the three passovers he mentions (ii. 13-15), or two years before the period assigned to the act by the other evangelists. The intimacy with the family at Bethany passes unnoticed by these three evangelists, nor do they mention the raising of Lazarus, although the most striking of the miracles, and attended by the most important results; nor is the remarkable voice from heaven, coming in answer to the request of Jesus for such a demonstration, spoken of by them. The discourses, moreover, by Jesus, in these his last days, are altogether different as represented by the three evangelists and by John, and are introduced at different times; by the former before the occurrence of the last supper, and by the latter subsequently thereto.

P.—The differences you point out appear to me sufficient to destroy the integrity of these narratives altogether. There are divergences between the three earlier evangelists which place them in issue to a degree to make their testimony ques-

tionable ; for example, connected with the family of Jesus coming to Bethlehem before his birth, the flight to Egypt, the final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, the purging of the temple, and the anointing. But when the narrative of John is also taken into account, I find it impossible to believe that these histories are based upon actual occurrences. If the ministry of Jesus extended over more than two years, as John declares, why should the others have brought it within the limits of one year? And if during the last six months of his life Jesus was labouring in Galilee, as the three evangelists represent, what could have led John to describe him as then in Judea? The passover, moreover, was an occurrence that could not fail to arrest the observation of Jewish historians, and yet we have the three describing Jesus as celebrating it with the apostles, while John has him executed before the feast.

The anointing.

What are the circumstances of the anointing?

S.—The accounts of this incident will be found at Matt. xxvi. 6, Mark xiv. 3, Luke vii. 36, and John xii. 1. They are so dissimilar that some are driven to suppose that there were two, if not three anointings. Matthew and Mark are, as usual, in good accord. The other two are divergent. But while there are contradictions of detail which cannot be reconciled, there are points of agreement which show that all were certainly describing the same event.

For example, all say that the anointing took place while Jesus sat at meat, that it was administered by a female, and that the act was objected to, and those who place the occurrence latest in point of time, namely Matthew and Mark, show that such a thing had not happened before, as it was to be recorded as a special memorial of the woman's devotion, "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world." At the same time they do not name the woman, and thus make void the celebration of her fame. Matthew, Mark, and John further agree that it occurred a few days before the last passover, and at Bethany; Matthew, Mark, and Luke specify the name of the owner of the house to have been Simon ; these three state the ointment to have been in an alabaster box, and Mark and John particularize that it was of spikenard ; Matthew, Mark, and John say that the objection taken was that the ointment might have been sold for the benefit of the

poor, Mark and John specifying three hundred pence as the sum it might have fetched; and Matthew, Mark, and John say that Jesus met this by observing that they had the poor always with them, and that the anointing was for his burial.

So far as to the points of accord, which are too numerous, and too decided, to allow of any other conclusion than that the narrators have been describing one and the same circumstance. The points of disagreement are these. Matthew and Mark say that it happened two days before the last passover, John six days, and Luke at a much earlier period. Matthew and Mark introduce it as occurring after the public entry into Jerusalem, while John says the entry took place the "next day" after the anointing. Matthew, Mark, and John place it at Bethany in Judea, and Luke in Galilee before Jesus came to Judea. Matthew and Mark describe the owner of the house where it occurred as Simon the leper, and Luke as Simon the Pharisee, who however, possibly, may also have been a leper ; John says it was at the house of Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Matthew and Mark say that while they were seated at meat, the woman, who administered the anointing, came and effected her purpose. They do not describe her by name, or otherwise, and leave the impression that she was some stranger who came in. Luke does not name the woman, but speaks of her as a well-known "sinner." John says she was Mary the sister of Lazarus. Now as Luke shows a knowledge of Mary and her sister Martha, and that Mary was remarkable for her piety (x. 38-42), the contradiction is absolute that Mary was not the woman of whom he spoke. Matthew, Mark, and Luke state that the woman had the ointment with her in a box when she came, and Mark adds that she broke the box in order to make use of its contents. This is in keeping with her being a stranger, coming into the house for the purpose in question. John, having in view that she was an inmate of the house, says that she "took a pound" of the ointment, as if she had weighed it out from a store already in the house. Matthew and Mark state that the woman poured the ointment on the head of Jesus; Luke and John that she applied it to his feet, afterwards wiping his feet with her hair; Mark says that "some" present objected to the use of the ointment ; Matthew, that it was the "disciples" of Jesus who

did so; John, that it was "one of his disciples," namely "Judas Iscariot;" and Luke that it was Simon the host. Matthew, Mark, and John represent the objection to have been uttered openly; Luke, that it arose merely in the mind of the objector, Jesus reading his thoughts and replying thereto. Matthew, Mark, and John say that the objection taken was to the waste of the ointment, which might have been sold and the proceeds applied to the poor, Jesus replying that the poor could be always dealt with, while he was about to part from them, and the ointment was in preparation for his burial. Luke, on the other hand, states that the objection was that Jesus should have suffered the contamination of being touched by a sinner, which he meets by lauding the woman for her devotion to himself, and forgiving her all her sins.

P.—Certainly, it is impossible to reconcile these discrepancies with the idea that the parties had any personal knowledge of the event described. One account so negatives the other, that no reliance, especially at this distance of time, can, it seems to me, be placed on any of these statements.

Association with family of Lazarus.

I observe that, according to John, Jesus is again, at the time of the anointing, at the house of Lazarus. Do the other evangelists mention this person, or speak of the associations of Jesus with the family?

S.—None of them show that they had any knowledge of Lazarus. John makes it appear that Jesus had a personal regard for him and his sisters (John xi. 5, 36), which, of course, involves intimacy. When the sisters send for Jesus at the time of the illness of Lazarus, they do so in these terms, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick," and at his death Jesus was so moved by the prevailing grief as to have wept; on which it was observed, "Behold how he loved him!" The three evangelists agree that Jesus, on his last journey to Jerusalem, passed through Bethany, where this family, pursuant to John, lived, and Matthew and Mark represent him to have been entertained at Bethany in another house; but none of them say a word of his coming in contact with Lazarus, upon whom, according to John, he at this time wrought such a miracle as to have restored him to life after he had been for days in his grave. Luke does mention Martha and Mary, and states that Jesus was received in their house. He says it was

situated in "a certain village," without giving its name. Had this been the well known village of Bethany, afterwards named by him more than once (xix. 29; xxiv. 50), he would scarcely have omitted to give its designation. But, in point of fact, he places this village, it may be gathered, not in Judea, but in Galilee or Samaria. He has Jesus near Bethsaida (ix. 10), then preparing to go to Jerusalem by Samaria (ix. 51, 52), and then at Martha's village, the one under consideration (x. 38); and after this he is described as "journeying toward Jerusalem" (xiii. 22), and then we learn that he did so "through the midst of Samaria and Galilee" (xvii. 11). In fact, the narratives of the first three evangelists, confining the ministry of Jesus to Galilee, give no opening for the intimacy with this family in Judea which John describes.

P.—If any reliance is to be placed upon the earlier evangelists, the statements of John, as to what took place at Bethany, become, it is apparent, absolutely falsified.

I do not at all understand John's representation of Jesus joining in the lamentation at the death of Lazarus, and weeping. Jesus had purposely stayed away to allow time for the illness of Lazarus to result in death, and was just about to raise him up to life. He had, in fact, planned a great surprise for his friends of a consoling and encouraging nature. To describe him, therefore, as weeping with them, as if Lazarus were absolutely lost to himself and them, presents itself to me as a sensational incident in what has the appearance of a concocted tale.

The last supper.

Be pleased now to give me the particulars connected with the last supper, in regard to the time of which you have mentioned a remarkable disagreement between John and the other evangelists.

S.—The difference in question is whether the supper was the paschal feast, as represented by the three earlier evangelists, or an ordinary supper, Jesus being put to death before the commemoration of the passover, as is stated by John. There are also minor differences. That the evangelists were all recounting the same event, is apparent from the identity of circumstances introduced, connected with the treachery of Judas, and Peter's denial of his master, and especially from

their concurrence in stating that on that night Jesus was arrested and suffered the following day.

The passover was kept on the first day of "the feast of unleavened bread." On "the fourteenth day of the month" (Nisan), "in the evening," the lamb was killed, and "that night" eaten, and for seven days, or "until the one and twentieth day of the month," no leaven was to be found in the houses of the Israelites (Exod. xii. 6-20). The accounts of the last supper appear in Matthew xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 7; and John xiii. 1. In representing the statements of the first three, who are in accord, I follow those of Luke. He says, "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed," and that Jesus "sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat." Jesus, through his powers of prescience, is able to indicate to them that on entering the city they would be met by a man bearing a pitcher of water, and they were to follow him into the house he might enter, and would there have a large furnished upper room placed at their disposal, where they were to make their preparations. "And they went," we are told, "and found as he had said unto them; and they made ready the passover." Jesus and the twelve apostles accordingly sit down to the meal, when he observes, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," and he is then said to have handed round to them a cup of wine, and to have distributed among them bread, in token of his being about to shed his blood and give his body for them, thus instituting that most holy ordinance observed by the Christians, which is known as the Eucharist. John's account is devoid of all these particulars. He premises it by saying that the time was "before the feast of the passover," and passes on at once to refer to "supper being ended," without any details as to where, or under what circumstances, the supper was held. Nor has he a word about the institution of the Eucharist, but in lieu he introduces a description of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples in token of their spiritual cleansing, and enjoining this performance upon his followers, who, however, do not observe the ceremony. In speaking of the treachery of Judas, he further shows that this was not the paschal feast by making the disciples misapprehend the meaning of Jesus when he tells Judas to do what he had to do quickly, saying they supposed, as "Judas had the bag," that Jesus had sent him out to buy what they had "need of against the feast." And when we come to the scene of the Roman judgment hall, at an early hour the following morning, he makes it still apparent that the passover had not occurred, saying of the accusing Jews, that "they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (xviii. 28); and we have Pilate, consequently, more than once, going to communicate with them outside the hall respecting the trial (xviii. 29, 38). Finally, as Jesus was made over for execution, it is stated that "it was the preparation of the passover" (xix. 14). The contradiction between John and the other evangelists is thus complete, and it is the more marked in that Luke declares that John himself was one of the two sent forward by Jesus to "make ready the passover," on the occasion of the supper.

The other divergencies are, that, according to Matthew and Mark, while they were occupied eating the supper, Jesus indicated that Judas should betray him; that afterwards the Eucharist was established; that they then sang a hymn, and went out to the mount of Olives; and that when there Jesus foretold that Peter should deny him thrice; while, according to Luke, the order was first the Eucharist; then the proclaiming the treachery of Judas; after this the prophecy of Peter's denial; and then the going out to the mount of Olives. Luke, moreover, ascribes different terms to Jesus when he speaks of the treachery of Judas and the denial of Peter to what the other evangelists record, and he introduces matters respecting a contention among the disciples who should be the greatest, the promise of Jesus that they should sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel, the provision made for them when he had sent them out on their mission, and their then possession of two swords, of all of which the earlier evangelists say nothing. The statement of John differs throughout, and he represents Jesus as holding at the time lengthened discourses, occupying four chapters, from xiv. to xvii., of which the others do not give a word.

P.—How do the accounts of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas agree? The betrayal by Judas.

S.—As is usual, Matthew and Mark are in accord; Luke varies from them in details; and John gives an independent and conflicting narrative. Matthew and Mark state that after the scene of the anointing, that is, before the last supper, Judas covenanted with the chief priests for the price of his treachery; Luke, that he did so as the passover drew near, which agrees in point of time; and John, that the design entered Judas' head only at the last supper, when he went out to carry out his purpose. The place to which Jesus withdrew with his disciples is described by Matthew and Mark as Gethsemane; by Luke, as the mount of Olives; and by John, as a garden across the brook Cedron. The locality, though variously described, may possibly be the same. According to Matthew and Mark, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him, apart from the rest, and then, throwing himself on the ground, was occupied in prayer. His "soul" is said to have been "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and his prayer was that he might escape the end awaiting him. This he repeated three times, each time coming to the three disciples, and speaking to them reproachfully on finding them sleeping. It is remarkable that these three were the selected spectators at the transfiguration, and on that occasion also fell asleep. His last address to these drowsy witnesses betokened confusion of mind on his own part. "Sleep on now," he said, "and take your rest," adding immediately, "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." Judas then appears with an armed band, indicates Jesus with a kiss, and he is carried off. Luke represents Jesus having withdrawn singly from the disciples to the distance of a stone's cast, and states that, after offering up prayer for deliverance once, an angel from heaven appeared unto him, strengthening him; but the interposition does not seem to have been of any avail, as he then was "in an agony," and "prayed more earnestly," the sweat falling from him to the ground, "as it were great drops of blood." He thereupon comes to the disciples and finds them sleeping for sorrow, and says, "Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." And while he speaks, Judas comes and betrays him with the kiss. John gives the scene quite a different character. Jesus utters no such prayer as the other evangelists attribute to him. He has no agony, and exhibits no weakness; nor is there scope for the kiss of Judas. Jesus boldly confronts the armed band, and asks them, "Whom seek ye?" and when they reply, "Jesus of Nazareth," he at once proclaims himself. On this, such is the power of his presence, the party, armed as they were, and bearing lanterns and torches, "went backward, and fell to the ground." They, however, sufficiently recover themselves to bind Jesus and take him away.

P.—I must say the story appears to me an incongruous one. Sorrow may certainly induce sleep, but fear, which must also have been present, would excite to wakefulness. And why did Jesus select three special witnesses of his sufferings, who were to witness nothing, but were to drop off to sleep repeatedly? The introduction of the same incident of the sleep here as at the transfiguration, where it was equally out of nature, betokens embellishment for some end that is not very apparent. Possibly the narrators thought thereby to depict how much the human spectators were overcome by scenes beyond their powers of endurance. Then how could these sleeping men report the prayer of Jesus? and how, in a night so dark as to call for the use of lanterns and torches, could the sweat falling from him as drops of blood be observed? And then there is an angel deputed to strengthen him, and yet no strength is imparted, the sufferer appearing to have given way all the more.

The prayer of such a person as Jesus, occupied on such a work as his, is, to my mind, inexplicable. He came on earth specially to die for sinners. What could he mean, then, by entreating God to let him escape this death? And if he really wished for such escape, was he powerless to effect it himself, or to move his Father to work out his deliverance?

S.—Assuredly it is not possible to account for the entreaties for escape attributed to Jesus by the earlier evangelists. According to John, as I have already had occasion to point out, the springs of his life were in his own hands, as they would be were he a divine being. "No man," he said, "taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." Certainly, pursuant to the earlier evangelists, his was far from bearing the aspect of a willing sacrifice. Nor is it conceivable that one so entirely in unison with God should offer up prayers

that were not to be attended to. "I knew," he had said on another occasion, "that thou hearest me always;" and at this time, when one of his disciples used violence in his defence, he showed he had certain help at hand. "Thinkest thou," he said, "that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. But," he added, and the consideration should have influenced the current of his prayer, "how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be" (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54).

P.—Why should Jesus have bethought him of the aid of legions of angels, when his own presence, according to one statement, sufficed to throw his adversaries to the ground? The inconsistencies in these narratives are such as can only have occurred from the writers drawing from the imagination. John has formed a more appropriate conception of the character he had to design; but, after all, when the same subject is treated in such very different styles, what deduction can be made but that the artists were not drawing from a living model? The kiss of Judas seems to me just such a sensational incident as a person might throw in to give effect to a fictitious narrative. As Jesus was a public character, who had exhibited himself openly to the people, what need was there for such a sign by which to point him out? Why also should Judas, who had been openly indicated by Jesus as a traitor, have had recourse to a symbol of friendship whereby to approach him?

S.—There was certainly no occasion for any such sign, the person of Jesus being well known to those who had to arrest him. "Are ye come out," he said to them, "as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me" (Matt. xxvi. 55).

P.—What was the value given to Judas for his offices, and was it such as to have tempted him?

S.—The sum amounted to about £3, 15s. As he bore the public bag, out of which he was in the habit of purloining (John xii. 6), it was for his interest to have maintained his connection with Jesus rather than to have put an end to it.[1]

P.—Small as the sum was, it would seem that Jesus was

[1] Strauss' New Life of Jesus, I., 375.

sufficiently known to have made its expenditure needless. Furthermore, if there was such a power connected with the presence of Jesus as to have caused the armed band, when he proclaimed himself to them, as John states, to recede and fall prostrate before him to the ground, how are we to account for the subsequent change of position when these same people lay hold of him, bind him, and carry him away captive? It is altogether a representation devoid of the appearance of reality.

Jesus avoiding publicity.

I gather that Jesus sought to avoid publicity, but with what motive, consistently with his calling and mission, it is difficult to understand.

S.—His conduct certainly is not properly explicable. The aspect he had to maintain was that of the Messiah, and the deliverance he was to effect was to be through his own death. Naturally, he should have courted observation, nor should he have exhibited any apprehension of the fate to which he had devoted himself. But we find him, as we have seen in the examination of the miracles, constantly suppressing the revelation that he was the Christ when the discovery was made that he was such, either by men or demons. And there is room to connect this suppression with the fear of death. On Peter proclaiming him to be "the Christ, the son of the living God," "then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ;" immediately after which we are informed, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." With this theme he was occupied too frequently for the mere purpose of a revelation (Matt. xvii. 22, 23; xx. 18, 19; xxvi. 2, 31). It was a matter evidently weighing upon his own mind, and the degree to which it oppressed him is depicted in the garden of Gethsemane. Nor was the method of his mission such as belonged properly to the Messiah. He is reserved in total obscurity during his early years until matured for action. John was his precursor, to proclaim his advent, and to prepare the way before him. Directly John was put aside, Jesus came upon the scene. He had then to exhibit himself to the Jews as their expected Messiah, the corner stone which the builders had to reject at their peril. Judea, and prominently

Jerusalem, was his appropriate field. John, in improvement upon the earlier histories, places him chiefly there; but the first three historians remove him at once to Galilee, and keep him there till just a few days before he was to suffer, when they present him, for the first time, in ministry at Jerusalem. His testimony, according to them, is offered, prominently, not to the Jews whom it concerned so much, but to the mixed barbaric race in Galilee. The choice of this field, there is room to say, may have arisen from personal apprehensions. Jesus goes thither directly he hears of John's incarceration (Matt. iv. 12), as if to avoid a similar fate; and when he learns that John has been put to death, he withdraws further "into a desert place apart" (Matt. xiv. 13). The evangelist John certainly so accounts for his operating in Galilee, representing his brethren as roundly taxing him with skulking and avoiding the proper quarter in which he should show himself. "After these things," he says, "Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world." And then we are told that Jesus, after saying, "I go not up yet unto this feast," "when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret" (John vii. 1-10). And thus John transfers him to Judea, for the ensuing six months till his death, against the representations of the earlier evangelists that he remained all this while in Galilee. But another, and a more probable solution, is that Galilee was the scene of his labours simply because there was his family abode. When he meets with John it is to be baptized by him. This particular purpose brought him from Galilee to Judea (Matt. iii. 13), and his object being effected, he returned to Galilee without even visiting Jerusalem. And when he makes his final journey to Jerusalem, it is to attend the passover as others might do. This is the foundation on which the earlier evangelists worked. The fourth evangelist, seeing how inappropriate it was that the

mission of the Messiah should be cast in Galilee, boldly transfers him to Judea. He takes this liberty in keeping with the whole scheme and tenor of his gospel, in which he seeks to exalt the subject of his narrative in action, feeling, and doctrine, as the God-man and the Messiah, unrestrained by the particulars given of him in the earlier histories. Matthew and Mark, as we have seen, keep closely together, Luke follows their method but is divergent in details, and John, with settled aim, puts forward an independent statement, which brings him, at nearly every turn, into absolute conflict with the others.

P.—The history, assuredly, does not improve upon acquaintance as to its title to reality. What is the next passage in it?

The judgment.

S.—That of the judgment. The accounts are to be found at Matthew xxvi. 57, Mark xiv. 53, Luke xxii. 54, and John xviii. 12. Jesus, when arrested, was taken to the palace of the high priest, brought before the Jewish council or Sanhedrim, and examined, and then taken before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate with whom lay the power of passing sentence of death, when he was condemned and led out for execution.

The arrest was made at night, and the crucifixion occurred the following morning, the judgment scene taking place in the interval. According to Mark (xv. 25), it was at the third hour, or 9 A.M., that Jesus was crucified. Allowing for his removal and being fixed upon the cross, the condemnation must have been effected by so early an hour as about eight in the morning. John, however, represents it to have been at about the sixth hour, or twelve o'clock, that Pilate gave Jesus up to suffer the sentence passed upon him (xix. 14). Matthew and Luke do not say when the crucifixion took place, but they side with Mark so far as to show that by the sixth hour Jesus had been for some time on the cross (Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44).

John has it that Jesus was led first to Annas the father-in-law of the high-priest Caiaphas, and afterwards to Caiaphas; the others, that he was taken direct to Caiaphas. Matthew represents the Sanhedrim to be sitting on the arrival of Jesus. He says, "and they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off." Mark makes a similar statement, saying, "And they led Jesus away to the high

priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And Peter followed him afar off." The improbability is great that the assembly were sitting at the time in question, which was night. Luke has a better version. He says that Jesus was taken to the hall of the high priest's palace, and that "as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council." John represents Jesus as before Caiaphas singly, without any mention of the Sanhedrim. In fact he excludes the trial before this body, making Pilate propose that the case, unsuitable for himself, should be laid before them. "Take ye him," he said, "and judge him according to your law;" to which they objected, as they had no power to pass the sentence of death they were bent upon securing.

Peter's denial of Jesus occurred after the arrival of the party at the palace of Caiaphas. It was in fulfilment of a prediction by Jesus which has been variously given. John, as we have seen, says this prediction was made while Jesus and his disciples were holding their last supper, and the others not until they had withdrawn to Gethsemane after the supper was over. Matthew and Mark represent that Jesus declared that all would be offended because of him that night, meaning that all would disown him, and that on Peter protesting that he could never behave in such a manner, the prophecy of his falling away was made. Luke does not lead up to the prophecy in this manner, but says that Jesus entered upon the subject direct with Peter, saying that Satan had desired to have him and sift him as wheat, on which Peter put in his protestation. John has altogether a different introduction of the matter. Jesus, according to him, was speaking of being glorified, and of his approaching departure from them, whereupon Peter declared he would follow him any where and lay down his life for him, and then the prophecy which is in question was uttered. Pursuant to Matthew, Luke, and John, the cock was not to crow till Peter had denied Jesus three times, but pursuant to Mark the terms were that the cock should not crow twice until he had denied him thrice. The narrators give the event in correspondence with their several versions of the prophecy; that is, according to the three who are in agreement, Peter denies all knowledge of Jesus three several times, and then the cock

crows, and according to Mark the cock crew after the first denial, and again "the second time" after the third; the whole being a remarkable exemplification, as in the instances of the "ass" and the "vesture," of how prophecies and events are shaped to be in accord. Matthew and Mark have it that the first denial was made while Peter was in the palace, and that he then went "out into the porch" where the second and third took place; but according to Luke and John the whole occurred in the same place where Peter first was. Luke, who it will be remembered has all the party at this time together waiting in the hall for the assemblage of the Sanhedrim, makes Jesus, as the cock crew, turn and look upon Peter, who thereon goes out and weeps bitterly, an incident not appearing in the narratives of Matthew and Mark, and not possible to be introduced therein, seeing that with them Jesus was then before the Sanhedrim, and Peter, elsewhere, with the servants. Matthew furthermore represents that when Peter made his third denial, he enforced his protestation by beginning "to curse and to swear," a strange feature in one to whom "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (xvi. 19) had shortly before been committed. Consistently with the course of their respective narratives, Matthew and Mark recount what took place with Jesus before the Sanhedrim, and then introduce the denials of Peter; whereas Luke places the denials first, while all were waiting in the hall for the assembling of the Sanhedrim.

Matthew and Mark, having the Sanhedrim seated in the dead of night, represent them as occupied, at this hour, in seeking for false evidence against Jesus, and one point they strove to prove against him was whether he had said that he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, on which, however, they could not get their witnesses to agree. The other evangelists say nothing of this search for evidence, and the statement that an august assembly were so engaged, without disguise, is surely of an improbable nature. The speech was one which Jesus had actually made, so that false evidence for it was not necessary; and whether such words had been uttered or not could in no way have influenced the issue of the trial. The account concludes with another improbable representation, namely, that these reverend seniors amused themselves, after the close of the examination, with spitting upon and buffeting

the accused. Luke more consistently attributes this conduct to the "men that held Jesus," and says it occurred before the Sanhedrim met.

Jesus is then taken to the tribunal of Pilate where he is finally condemned. Luke, however, has it that Pilate, finding that Jesus was a Galilean, sends him to Herod, to whose jurisdiction he belonged, and who happened then to be at Jerusalem, and that Herod, not being able to make anything of him, retransmits him to Pilate, who concludes the trial. This recourse to Herod is excluded by the narratives of the other evangelists, who have Jesus continuously before Pilate from the time that he is brought to him. According to Matthew, Mark, and John, Pilate's soldiers robe and crown Jesus and ill-use him; but according to Luke it was Herod's people who treated him thus. Matthew says the robe was a scarlet one, and Mark and John that it was purple. Luke does not describe the colour.

The accounts differ as to what exactly passed at this trial, that of John being considerably in excess as to matter over those of the other evangelists. Nothing is even alleged against the accused to bring him under the power of the law, and the judge finds him innocent of all offence. And yet, while proclaiming this innocence, he is made to acquiesce in consigning the accused to death. The whole character of the trial, so called, is devoid of substantiality, and therefore sins against probability; and it is inconceivable that, under a well ordered judicature, such as that of Rome, the unseemly, inane, proceedings described, could have had place. Pilate is even made, when condemning an innocent man, to wash his hands in token of his own innocence, a formula, moreover, of Jewish ordinance (Deut. xxi. 6, 7), which a Roman would not have resorted to. Nor is it credible that these proceedings, consisting, according to Luke, of three examinations, held before three separate tribunals, could have been brought to a close, and an unanimous condemnation to death, without evidence of guilt, have been secured, by so early an hour as about eight o'clock in the morning, as is to be gathered from the statement of Mark.

P. I must say these narratives are consistent in their inconsistencies. Throughout they betray their want of basis upon realities. The concluding scenes are, I presume, the death and the resurrection.

S. They are. The crucifixion is given at Matthew xxvii. 32, Mark xv. 21, Luke xxiii. 26, and John xix. 17. The accounts agree as to the main fact, but differ throughout the details. The crucifixion.

According to the three earlier evangelists, as the party were taking Jesus to the place of execution, they fell in with one Simon of Cyrene, "who passed by, coming out of the country," and they compelled him to bear the cross. John, with more adaptation to the doctrine of Jesus, where he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. xvi. 24), represents Jesus as himself bearing his cross.

Luke says that a great concourse of people, including women, accompanied him, bewailing and lamenting him, and that Jesus turned round and told them not to weep for him, but for themselves and for their children, for the greater calamities that were to come upon them. The other evangelists do not mention this incident.

The earlier evangelists say that when they reached the place where he was to suffer, the executioners offered Jesus something to drink. Matthew says it was vinegar mingled with gall; Mark, wine mingled with myrrh; and Luke, simply vinegar.

Luke has it that when crucified Jesus asked for forgiveness for his executioners, but this is not mentioned by the others.

Then we have John saying that the "vesture" alone was cast lots for, the rest of the "garments" being made up in four parts, "to every soldier a part," while the other evangelists represent that the whole were cast lots for, without distinction.

A label, or "accusation," was set upon the cross, but each evangelist, while professing to give the very words of the inscription, describes it differently. One says it was, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews;" another, "The King of the Jews;" the third, "This is the King of the Jews;" and the fourth, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

All agree that two others, described by the first three evangelists as thieves, or malefactors, were crucified with Jesus. The passers by, and the chief priests or rulers, are said to have derided Jesus. Matthew and Mark represent that the thieves, executed with him, did so likewise; but Luke states that only one of them joined in the derision, while the other rebuked his companion, and himself, recognizing Jesus for what he was,

exclaimed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" to which Jesus replied, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." This remarkable manifestation escapes the notice of the other evangelists, and John (xx. 17) negatives the declaration attributed to Jesus that he was to be that day transferred to paradise, by making him say, three days subsequently, when in his resurrection state, that he had "not yet ascended to his Father." If what John says can be accepted, then Luke has been guilty of embellishment.

Darkness is then said to have come "over the whole land" from the sixth to the ninth hour. It was "about the sixth hour," according to John, that Pilate, in the judgment scene, presented Jesus to the Jews, saying, "Behold your king," after which the removal to the place of execution, and the execution itself, had to take place; so that with this given precision of time, John's narrative excludes the preternatural darkness alleged by the other evangelists. John, in fact, in his account of the crucifixion, mentions no such phenomenon, and he describes a communication as occurring at the foot of the cross which also excludes the darkness. The mother of Jesus, with Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, as also the disciple whom he specially loved, and who is understood to be John himself, are stated by John to have "stood by the cross," and Jesus, observing them, commits his mother and John to each other. None of the other evangelists notice the presence of the mother of Jesus, or the occurrence of such an incident, and Matthew and Mark say, after bringing their narratives down to the death of Jesus, that "many women were there beholding afar off," among whom they particularize one of the said females, namely, Mary Magdalene; so that here, if they are accurate, John must have indulged in scene painting.

It is at the ninth hour, according to the earlier evangelists, that Jesus expired, and all agree that ere he breathed his last he uttered an exclamation. Matthew and Mark have it that it was the despairing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Luke attributes to him the very different and more appropriate sentiment, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And John states that he merely uttered, "It is finished."

At this time, pursuant to Matthew, Mark, and John, a spunge

dipped in vinegar was offered to him. Matthew and Mark say this was placed on a reed, John upon hyssop.

As Jesus gave up the ghost, the earlier evangelists state that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, a phenomenon, the signification of which would seem to be that the Jewish dispensation was at an end, the holy of holies, screened from public view by the veil, being now thrown open to all. John has no notice of this significant and marvellous demonstration. Matthew adds a succession of wonders that are not reported by any of the other evangelists. He says, "The earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

According to Matthew and Mark the centurion, who was on duty on the occasion, as Jesus expired, acknowledged him to be the Son of God. Matthew says it was the earthquake and the attendant wonders which drew from him this acknowledgment; Mark, that the loud cry of Jesus, as he died, led thereto. Luke has it that the centurion's recognition was simply to Jesus being a righteous man. John says nothing of this.

The early evangelists represent that many women attended the execution, and that they had followed Jesus from Galilee. This corresponds with their declaration that he was just from Galilee, which had been the field of his labours. John, who makes Judea the scene of his ministry, has nothing as to this following.

John states that as the approaching sabbath was a high day, and it was an object that the bodies of those executed should not be kept hanging upon it, the Jews obtained an order to have the legs of the victims broken, so that they might be put an end to and removed, and that Jesus being found already dead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, in lieu of thus mutilating him. The other evangelists say nothing of this notable circumstance, and Mark makes a statement inconsistent therewith. He says that when permission was asked of Herod that evening to bury Jesus, he was then ignorant of his death, and wondered at it, and sent for the centurion to assure himself on the subject; whereas, if he had already given an order to have the victims put an end to, the

news of his death could have caused him no such doubt or surprise.

All accounts agree that Joseph of Arimathæa begged the body of Pilate, and laid it in a tomb. Mark says that he "went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus;" John, that he did so "secretly for fear of the Jews." The earlier evangelists say that he simply wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and then closed the sepulchre with a stone. John has it that he was accompanied by Nicodemus, who brought about an hundred weight of myrrh and aloes, and winding the body "in linen clothes with the spices," embalmed it in the manner usual with the Jews. Luke is distinct that there was no such embalming. He says that Mary Magdalene and other women followed the body, and "beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid," after which they "returned and prepared spices and ointments," which of course they would not have done had the embalming been already undertaken. He says that on the Sunday following, this being the Friday, the women came accordingly with the spices, and in this he is supported by Mark. Matthew says that the sepulchre was a new one, which Joseph had hewn for himself. The tomb is one hitherto never used, as the ass on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem was one "whereon never man sat." It was just so in respect of the removal of the ark in the time of David. It was placed on a "new cart," drawn by "two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke" (1 Sam. vi. 7). These features are obviously to enhance the importance of the personage or object treated of. The other evangelists do not say to whom the tomb belonged, and John leaves it to be inferred that it was selected simply because near at hand. Matthew has it that the day following the burial, the chief priests and pharisees went to Pilate and obtained from him permission to set a watch on the sepulchre, lest the disciples might remove the body, and then represent that Jesus had risen from the dead, in fulfilment of his prediction that "after three days I will rise again;" a precaution which was thereupon taken. The other evangelists do not record this circumstance.

P.—The crucifixion was an event that would arrest attention in a very decided way. The discrepancies you have pointed out in these statements can scarcely be accounted

for but by the conclusion that the narrators were not eye witnesses of the scene, or that such a thing as they describe had no real occurrence. For example, persons actually present on such an occasion could not have mistaken the label of accusation so as each to report it in a different manner; they would surely have concurred in noticing the very remarkable confession of faith of the dying thief, and the gracious assurance he received at the time from their divine master. One who had the full persuasion that that very day his soul was to be translated to paradise, and who, as he expired, could resign his spirit with confidence into the hands of his heavenly father, could not also, at this very time, have been overtaken by a sense of utter abandonment by God; still less could a divine personage, knowing he was from God, and was returning to God, have been overcome by so debasing and so untrue a sentiment. Narrators, if spectators, would not have overlooked the very interesting communication made by Jesus to his mother and favourite disciple at the foot of the cross, and, on the contrary, have reported those so spoken to as standing too far off to be addressed. If the death of Jesus had produced a convulsion of the earth, a rending of rocks, and the resurrection of many holy persons from their graves, not one of them would have failed to record such wondrous demonstrations of the truth of their master's mission; nor could they have failed to notice the piercing of his side, or fallen into such error as has arisen respecting the embalming of his body.

This execution, as reported, is a very remarkable one. It was that of a godly man, pronounced innocent by his judge, and yet given up to the senseless malice of his enemies, who had such influence as to commit the ruler to this desecration of his office. Is there any support for the event from contemporaneous history?

Historical supports.

S.—There are many writers of that and of closely succeeding times, in whose pages such an event should have had place, had it really occurred. Mr Cooper, in his lectures, enumerates thirty, others than Christians, who lived from A.D. 40 to A.D. 176. I will particularly instance Philo, a devout Jew, of the time ascribed to Jesus, who was much occupied with Biblical literature and the interests of his people. He has not a word on the subject, and in fact has no note of Jesus or his followers.

Among the others there are two, namely Josephus who lived A.D. 40, and Tacitus who was of A.D. 110, in whose writings passages speaking of the execution of Jesus appear. In that in Josephus his resurrection is also mentioned. Critics, however, see grounds for rejecting both as forged interpolations. Josephus was a Jew, and ever remained such, and yet in the passage in question is made to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. The passage in Tacitus, had it been genuine, would not have been overlooked by all the early Christian writers in their various disputations with objectors, and especially by Tertullian, who quoted largely from his works, and the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, who was zealous in his defence of the faith and greedy of materials with which to support it.[1]

P.—It is suspicious, certainly, that the condemnation of Jesus by the Roman authority should be at once of so improbable a character, and destitute of support from independent sources, except in two passages which may be condemned as fabricated.

Phenomena at death of Jesus.

Who were the saints of whom Matthew speaks as having risen from their graves? To whom did they appear? And how was it that their graves were opened as Jesus died, while their bodies did not come out till after his resurrection? What also became of them afterwards?

S.—I am unable to give you any information on this subject. Their not appearing till after Jesus rose from death would seem to have been introduced so as not to give them the precedence over him in the exercise of the privilege of resurrection. He is said to be "the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts xxvi. 23); "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20); "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. i. 18).

P.—The statement seems to me a very clumsy one. To mark and enhance the death of the Messiah, nature is said to be convulsed, and these graves thrown open, but the exit of the saints who were to come out of them is restrained till he should first have made his egress from his tomb three days later. And, after all, he had no such precedence in resurrection, for several persons are said to have been raised from the dead by the prophets of old and by himself, two passed into heaven without ever being in their graves, and one of these, namely Elias

[1] R. Cooper's Lectures on the Bible, 51-54, 58-61.

appeared to him with Moses in risen life at the time of his transfiguration.

Are the disturbances of nature which are said to have occurred at the crucifixion, namely the preternatural darkness for three hours, and the earthquake, mentioned by historians of the time?

S. They are not. Two of the writers of that period, namely the elder Pliny and Seneca, who both lived in A.D. 79, left works "recording all the great phenomena of nature, earthquakes, comets, eclipses," &c., and yet mention "nothing applicable to the narrative of Matthew."[1]

P. That seems to demonstrate that nothing of the kind could really have occurred. Moreover, had there been such phenomena, the other evangelists would not have failed to support their representations with these divine manifestations.

The resurrection.

Let us pass to the next and concluding event, that of the resurrection. I understand this fact to be the support of the crowning doctrine of the Christians, on which their hopes of eternal happiness absolutely depend.

S. It is so. The idea is that without the sacrifice of the Messiah all would perish, and that by participation in his resurrection life they get that new life which is free of sin and its penal consequences. "If Christ be not risen," says Paul, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ.—And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. xv. 14-18). Should the resurrection of Jesus therefore fail of proof, the whole scheme falls to the ground as utterly baseless and void.

P. It is a momentous issue to launch upon the reliability of human testimony, and the capacity of the mind of man to investigate and appreciate it. The evidence, seeing how much hangs upon it, should certainly be of a most complete and convincing order.

How did the precaution of sealing the tomb, and setting a watch upon it, work to prevent the possibility of the disciples abstracting the body surreptitiously?

[1] Hennell's Works, 230.

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How did the precaution of sealing the tomb, and setting a watch upon it, work to prevent the possibility of the disciples abstracting the body surreptitiously?

[1] Hennell's Works, 230.

S. It went for nothing. It is Matthew alone who speaks of such a measure being taken, and even according to him it was done in an incomplete manner, and was finally ineffectual. That is, he says that it was not till the day after the burial that the chief priests thought of setting the watch, so that during the intervening night the tomb had been left unguarded and might have been robbed of the corpse. And, after all, when Jesus is said to have arisen on the third day, the chief priests and elders are stated to have consulted together how to falsify the event; and it ended in their giving "large money unto the soldiers, saying, say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." "And this saying," it is added, "is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matt. xxviii. 11-15).

P. So that from the very outset the resurrection was considered on the spot an unreal thing! But Matthew's statement appears to me, on the face of it, to deserve no consideration. How could he have come to know of the secret treaty between the priests and the soldiers? What sort of testimony could the latter be expected to give of what had happened when their eyes were closed in sleep? And would they, for any sum, have subjected themselves to the penalty for sleeping on their posts, which, I presume, would be death?

Let me hear now what is said as to the resurrection itself. Be pleased, at the same time, to point out wherever there may be discrepancies in the statements made.

S. You have justly expected that the evidence on this vital point should be of a full and convincing nature. That, however, is far from being its character. No where, throughout these narratives, do inconsistencies of the most violent and irreconcileable description so much abound as in the accounts given of the appearances made by Jesus after his death.

Matthew begins by stating what occurred "in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," implying that the sabbath ended with the morning of the succeeding day. This shows that the writer, whoever he was, was not aware of the Jewish division of the days from sunset to sunset. In the same way John (xx. 19) speaks of the "evening, being (still) the first day of the week," whereas the evening ushered in a new day.

The earliest visitants to the tomb were certain females, one or more. Mark says they were there "at the rising of the sun;" John "when it was yet dark." All agree that Mary Magdalene was one of these females. John represents that she was alone; Matthew that another Mary accompanied her; Mark that there was a third female named Salome; and Luke that there was a plurality beyond three, his statement being that the party consisted of "Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them;" so that with him the number of the females must have been at the least five.

Matthew says there was at the time "a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door;" adding, that, "for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." None of the other evangelists speak of the earthquake, or of the descent of the angel, or of the presence of the keepers. Such angels as they describe were on the spot when seen, and they agree that the stone had already been rolled away.

Matthew states that there was an angel who was seen seated on the stone outside the sepulchre; Mark that he was seated inside it; Luke that there were two who were standing, whether outside or in is not apparent; and John shows that none were noticed at this first visit.

Matthew says that the angel communicated to the women the fact of the resurrection, and invited them to come and "see the place where the Lord lay," not representing that they entered. Mark says they entered the sepulchre of their own accord, and then only saw the angel, who thereon told them of the resurrection. Luke has it that they entered and discovered for themselves that the body was gone, and were "much perplexed thereabout," after which they observed the angels, who then spoke to them. John states that directly Mary Magdalene, the only female of whom he speaks, saw that the stone had been rolled away, she ran off to communicate the intelligence, showing thus that she did not enter the sepulchre, or see or converse with any one.

Matthew and Mark say that the angel directed the women to inform the disciples that Jesus was risen, and bid them go to Galilee where he would appear to them. Luke's report of

the speech of the angels differs. He makes them exclaim, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" and then, after telling them that Jesus had risen, to add, "Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again;" nor does he report any message sent to the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

Matthew has it that the women "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy: and did run to bring his disciples word." Luke says that they "returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest." While Mark declares that they "went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid."

John's account, as has been seen, altogether differs. He makes Mary Magdalene, the only woman he speaks of, run off directly she had observed that the stone had been removed from the entrance of the sepulchre. He says she went and told Peter, and the disciple "whom Jesus loved," that is John himself, that the body had been removed; on which the two run, enter the sepulchre, and see the body clothes there, after which they "went away again unto their own home." To this time, consequently, according to John, there had been no apparition of angels. He represents Mary as then standing "without at the sepulchre weeping," and adds, that on stooping down, and looking into it, she saw two angels seated at the head and feet where the body had lain. These, it will be noticed, had been invisible to the men who had just before entered and examined the sepulchre. The angels say no more to her than merely to ask, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Luke has it that after the women had "told these things unto the apostles," Peter, singly, ran and looked into the sepulchre and saw the linen, not however entering the sepulchre. In other respects this whole scene in John, including the visit of Peter and John, and the double visit of Mary, is peculiar to his narrative, and its circumstances are altogether inconsistent with those in the other narratives.

So far as to the visit of the women. Matthew further states that as the women, two in number, went to tell the disciples

what they had witnessed, Jesus met them and repeated the message that the brethren were to proceed to Galilee where he would appear to them. Mark, though he speaks of two other women being with Mary Magdalene, represents Jesus as appearing to this Mary alone, on which "she went and told them that had been with him." The others, seemingly, had parted company with her when all three fled from the sepulchre in fear. Luke records no appearance of Jesus to any of the women. John says that after Mary Magdalene had been addressed by the angels, she turned and saw Jesus, but taking him to be the gardener asked him where the body was; after which Jesus addressed her, and gave her a message to the brethren, this, however, not relating to his meeting them at Galilee, but to his approaching ascension. She then goes and tells the disciples.

Matthew proceeds to say that when Jesus met Mary Magdalene and the other woman he speaks of, "they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him," a procedure to which he made no objection. John has it that directly Mary Magdalene, the only woman he mentions, had recognised Jesus, he said to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father," thus prohibiting her, (for some unfathomable reason,) putting hand upon him.

Matthew describes no other apparition of Jesus on the day of his resurrection. Luke states that on this day two disciples fell in with him at Emmaus, a village "about three score furlongs," or between seven and eight miles, from Jerusalem. This is the first apparition he mentions, and he gives it as the first that had occurred. The disciples in question, not recognizing Jesus, recount to him, as to a stranger, what had happened, and in speaking of the death of Jesus, they say that this had put an end to their hopes. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this," they add, "to-day is the third day since these things were done." Of the visit of the females to the tomb they were aware, apparently from the women themselves, but evince entire ignorance of any of them having seen Jesus on the occasion. "Yea," they go on with their relation to the supposed stranger, "and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not

his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not." This, in the most pointed manner, excludes any apparition of Jesus to this time. The women, in speaking of the vision of angels, would not have failed to say that they had also seen the Lord, had such been the case, nor would this, the most important part of their statements, have been kept back from these disciples. The "but him they saw not" is thus applicable to all who had been in a position to have seen him had he risen, and it was the fact that, according to their apprehension, he still lay in death, which filled them with despondency. Jesus on this expounds to them the scriptures concerning himself, accompanies them to their home, the day being then "far spent," and while seated at meat with them their eyes were opened, they recognised him, and "he vanished out of their sight." Mark briefly supports this representation by saying, "after that," that is after the appearance to Mary Magdalene, "he appeared in another form, (whatever that may mean,) unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country."

The two disciples in question, according to Luke, returned at once to Jerusalem, and finding the eleven together, told them what they had witnessed. At the same time they hear from them that the Lord had appeared to Simon Peter, though of such appearance no account is given anywhere. Luke and John certainly speak of Peter having gone to the tomb, but they show that he then saw nothing except the clothes in which the body had been wrapped. Luke goes on to say that while all were thus together, Jesus suddenly "stood in the midst of them," and on this occasion, though apparently he had still not yet ascended to his Father, so far from objecting to contact with his body, as when, according to John, he fell in with Mary Magdalene that same day, he actually invited it. "Behold," he said, "my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Upon this he partook "of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb," and then, after expounding to them the prophecies concerning himself, he led them out to Bethany, and thereupon "was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Mark confirms this account with brevity. He says, "afterward," that is, after the meeting with the two at Emmaus, "he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat," and describing a communication made to them, he concludes by saying, "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." John also describes this appearance to the apostles, noticing that "the doors were shut" when Jesus suddenly "stood in the midst." He states that Thomas was not of the party, though Luke has it that the eleven were all present. He also reports the words used by Jesus differently, and says nothing of his having expounded the scriptures to them, or partaken of food with them.

This concludes the events of the day of the resurrection; and the narratives of Mark and Luke, as will be seen, admit of no more apparitions, as, pursuant to them, after appearing to the eleven, Jesus ascended into heaven, and took up the seat there appointed to him, on "the right hand of God."

Matthew, however, goes on with a further exhibition. His statement was that it was in Galilee that Jesus had intimated he would appear to the apostles. He, accordingly, has it that "the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him." This excludes the prior meetings in Judea to the two disciples at Emmaus, and to the eleven apostles at Jerusalem. It excludes also the ascension to heaven, with which the last of these meetings is said to have terminated. From Jerusalem to the southern limit of Galilee is over fifty miles in a direct line. In what part of Galilee the appearance mentioned by Matthew took place is not described, but it is evident that it must have occupied the disciples more days than one to get there. The resort of Jesus to earth, after his resurrection, is consequently prolonged by so much beyond the time stated by Mark and Luke. No other evangelist speaks of this particular apparition, although Mark, inconsistently with his statement that Jesus saw and parted with the disciples in Judea, confirms Matthew in saying that the meeting was appointed in Galilee.

John has two other apparitions which are excluded by the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He had said that

Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared among the other apostles at Jerusalem. He represents Thomas, when told of this appearance, as refusing credence thereto, saying, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Upon this, Jesus, to convince him, appears to the eleven again eight days afterwards. He comes, as before, standing in the midst of them, the doors at the time "being shut," and he then gives Thomas the ocular and tangible evidence he had demanded. This places Jesus on earth eight days longer than mentioned by Mark and Luke.

John proceeds to recount a further meeting, and he states this to have been in Galilee, not saying, however, when it occurred. Jesus comes upon Peter and six others as they were fishing at the sea of Tiberias or Galilee, and leads them to make a miraculous draft of fishes. On coming on shore they find a fire, with fish laid on it, ready for them, this, apparently, having been provided supernaturally. Jesus partakes of bread and fish with them, and holds communication with them on sundry subjects. "This," says John, "is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead," an enumeration which excludes the apparition on a mountain in Galilee, described by Matthew as the particular occasion on which Jesus exhibited himself to them. And "there are also many other things," John declares, "which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Paul, whose writings are considered to have been put forward before the gospels appeared, speaks of apparitions of Jesus which ill accord with what is to be found in these narratives. He states that "he was seen of Cephas (Peter), then of the twelve," (there being but eleven apostles existing at the time). "After that," he goes on to say, "he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.—After that—of James; then of all the apostles. And, last of all, he was seen of me also," he adds, "as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. xv. 3-8). Of the apparition to the five hundred the four evangelists say nothing; and had there been a manifestation

of so marked and important a sort, they could not have failed to have known thereof and to have mentioned it. Their silence, consequently, excludes such apparition; and it is, furthermore, directly negatived by other statements. Peter is made to declare that Jesus was shown, "not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us (the apostles), who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts x. 41). According to this he could not have exhibited himself to such a concourse as Paul describes; nor were there, at this early period, so many as five hundred brethren to whom he could have shown himself, the whole number, when congregated together, amounting to but "about an hundred and twenty" (1 Acts i. 15).

The exhibitions to the apostles, according to the Acts, were far more numerous, and extended over a much more lengthened time, than the accounts of any of the evangelists, except, possibly, that of John, will allow of. To them he is said to have shown himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (i. 3); but the writer of this book has not thought proper to describe any of these manifestations, or to put on record the communications respecting the future kingdom which are said to have been so liberally made. Such a generalizing of matters so wondrous, and of so great consequence to be thoroughly known and understood, certainly ill consists with reality. He tells us something that passed at the last apparition, and then describes the ascension; but, differently from Mark and Luke, represents it to have taken place from the mount of Olives, and to have been attended by a vision of angels (i. 9-12).

Last instructions of Jesus.

I pass now to the concluding instructions Jesus is said to have communicated as he took his final leave of the apostles.

Matthew's account is that he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Mark describes a similar mission, but in different terms. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." And then he represents Jesus as describing the miraculous powers which were to be possessed by "them that believe."

That any such instructions were imparted to the apostles is, however, negatived by their subsequent conduct. It required a special revelation to be conveyed symbolically to Peter to show him that he was at liberty to communicate the faith to the Gentiles and hold fellowship with them. After describing the vision displayed to him to induce him to act upon the desire of the centurion Cornelius, and those with him, to hear the gospel, he says, addressing the parties, "Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts x. 28). For this association with the "uncircumcised" he was rebuked by the other apostles, notwithstanding that the act had been successful in converting those thus addressed; whereupon Peter justified himself by recounting the vision vouchsafed to him. To none did it occur to cite the instructions of Jesus that the gospel should be preached to "all nations;" whence there is room to conclude, not only that no such instructions had been given, but that the occasion for them, when they are said to have been uttered, namely, at a reappearance of Jesus after death, had not occurred. However, to revert to these statements, according to them, the apostles were at once deputed to preach the gospel, being fully endowed for the office. Jesus had received "all power in heaven and in earth," and in the plenitude of this power sent them forth. John puts the same matter before us, but under different circumstances. "Peace be unto you," Jesus is reported to have said; "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This power of remission, or condemnation, said to have been entrusted to the apostles, was one fraught with consequences to their fellow-creatures of such stupendous importance that it is impossible to believe that every one but John should have kept silence on the subject, had the destinies

of mankind been so committed to this early body of the followers of Jesus. John, however, as we see, corresponds with Matthew and Mark in showing that the disciples were at once sent forth fully empowered for their work. Where he differs is in representing this mission having been conferred upon them at one of the intermediate apparitions of Jesus, and not at his last appearing. He places the mission at the same meeting alleged for it by Mark; but then he has two other apparitions occurring subsequently, with opening for an indefinite number more.

When we pass to the statement of Luke the character of the transaction is greatly changed. The apostles were to preach "repentance and remission of sins" in the name of Jesus "among all nations," but they were restricted to "beginning at Jerusalem." Nor were they to operate there till specially empowered from above; and for the necessary gift of the Holy Ghost they were to remain in Jerusalem. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." And the statement in the Acts accords with this. It is there said that Jesus "being assembled together" with the apostles, "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The account in Luke restricts all the events recorded by him to the limits of one day. The women visit the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection, the two disciples at Emmaus meet with Jesus "that same day," he stays with them till "toward evening," and then vanished. The disciples "the same hour" seek the apostles at Jerusalem, and while with them Jesus again appears. It is on this occasion that he entrusts the apostles with their mission, and bids them "tarry in the city of Jerusalem" till endowed with the promised power to carry it out "from on high;" after which he leads them out to Bethany, and ascends to heaven. The power in question, namely, the descent upon them of the Holy Ghost, is conferred,

according to the Acts, at Pentecost, fifty days afterwards. Luke's narrative is thus not only conclusive as to the manifestations of Jesus being confined to one day, but to the apostles abiding in Jerusalem till the expiration of fifty days more; so that it excludes the appointment Jesus is said by Matthew and Mark to have made to meet them in Galilee,—the consequent journey of the apostles to Galilee, and their seeing Jesus there on a mountain, as stated by Matthew,—the second manifestation he makes of himself eight days after the resurrection in Jerusalem, and the third taking place in Galilee, as stated by John,—and the forty days' resort to earth, as declared in the book of Acts. On the other hand, John's statement that the Holy Ghost was personally imparted to the apostles by Jesus at the close of the day of his resurrection, excludes the statements appearing in Luke and the Acts that this endowment was withheld till Pentecost, and then accomplished.

Actualities of death and resurrection.

The Christian creed depends altogether upon the occurrence of the death and resurrection of Jesus. These are facts, the realization of which should have been so described as to place them beyond all room for question. But the narratives have not been thus framed. The death by crucifixion was one brought about by no attack upon any vital organ, but simply by exhaustion. Criminals have been known to hang for days on the cross before the vital spark became extinguished. Jesus was there but six hours at the most, when he is said to have given up the ghost, and Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. He is said to have cried out "with a loud voice" as he expired, which is inconsistent with death occurring from exhaustion. The incident of the spear being afterwards driven into his side is mentioned by John alone. Luke says at his apparition to the eleven "he showed them his hands and his feet," there being no mention of a wound in the side, which is thus ignored. John, to be consistent with his own representations, introduces mention of the side, but in terms that are obviously exaggerated. The wound is said to be of that magnitude that Thomas might thrust his hand into it. If so, something more would have protruded than the alleged blood and water. Pilate's surprise at the death having occurred when the time came for taking down the corpse for its burial, shows that he had not authorized its being expedited by violent

means, as represented by John. Not therefore admitting the statement of this wound, it is within the bounds of possibility that the case may have been one of suspended animation, and not death. The body passes at once into friendly hands. It is taken to a sepulchre close by, where Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus are occupied with it. They are said to have embalmed it, but that is contradicted by the statement appearing elsewhere that the women came to perform this task on the third day afterwards. They may have been otherwise engaged, namely, in applying remedial measures. There is a tale of a watch being set upon the tomb, but this is confined to Matthew, and is full of improbabilities; and even Matthew shows that for one night the place was left unguarded. There is no witness to the actual occurrence of the resurrection. The tomb is visited on the third day and found to be empty, and Jesus afterwards appears and shows himself for one day or more, according as to which of the conflicting narratives may be preferred. What is there, of a conclusive sort, to negative the supposition that Jesus was not really dead when taken down from the cross, that his friends may have resuscitated him, and that he afterwards exhibited himself as if raised from the dead? His appearing, as Luke points out, not as "a spirit," but with "flesh and bones," and his partaking of food, favour this idea, as does the circumstance that he showed himself, "not to all the people," but to "witnesses chosen," namely, a select few who were his friends, and these assembled with closed doors. His passing through these doors, and his ascension to heaven, are additions that might readily be made if the resuscitation were converted into a resurrection from the dead.

Recapitulation of discrepancies as to the resurrection.

But the narratives of the resurrection are so put, in utter conflict with one another, that much higher ground must of necessity be taken. They vary at every approachable point to a degree too decided, and too frequent, to be reconcileable with the idea that the facts are true and the narrators well informed; and one set of facts invariably excludes the other. When all is taken into account, the result of the examination is, that not a single circumstance remains which is not rendered impossible of occurrence by some other circumstance.

The opening scene, especially, namely, the visit of the females to the sepulchre, is so replete with discrepancies, that

if an enemy to the reception of these narratives had purposely introduced the discords, they hardly could have been more numerous, or more complete in their conflict. It is uncertain whether this visit was made at sunrise, or while it was dark; whether one woman, or two, or three, or five, and possibly more, made it; whether one woman made the visit twice, or only once; whether the women were permitted to touch the person of Jesus, or prohibited so doing; whether either two men, or only one, also went to the sepulchre; whether there was an earthquake and a descent of an angel or not; whether the stone at the door was there on their arrival, or had previously been rolled away; whether there was but one angel, and he seated outside the tomb, or within it, or whether there were two angels who were standing, or no angels on this first occasion at all; whether the women entered the sepulchre or not; and whether they told any one of what they had seen or not.

It is furthermore uncertain whether the disciples were enjoined to proceed to Galilee, or directed to tarry in Jerusalem; and whether the manifestation of Jesus was made to them, according to special appointment, in Galilee, or occurred, actually, more than once, in Judea and Jerusalem; and every narrated speech, whether uttered by the angels, the females, or by Jesus, though professing to be given verbatim as spoken, differs altogether, as reported, in each several account.

There are in all ten manifestations of Jesus declared to have taken place, without counting that said by Paul to have been vouchsafed to himself, after the ascension, as to "one born out of due time." The issues of these I will proceed to particularize.

(1.) Jesus appears to Mary Madgalene and another, or to Mary alone, early on the morning of the resurrection. This is excluded by Luke, who shows that late in the day it was only known that they had had a vision of angels.

(2.) He appears in the evening to two disciples at Emmaus, within a few miles of Jerusalem. This is excluded by Matthew, who represents that Jesus was next to appear in Galilee, and did so. It is excluded also by John, who, in enumerating the apparitions, leaves no more room for this one.

(3.) He appears the same day to the eleven as they sat at meat in Jerusalem. This is excluded by Matthew's statement that the exhibition to them was to be in Galilee, and was so.

(4.) He appears again to the eleven eight days afterwards in Jerusalem. This is excluded by the statement as to Galilee being the place of meeting made by Matthew, and by the declarations of Mark and Luke that the ascension took place at the close of the day of the resurrection.

(5.) He appears to the eleven for the first time, on a mountain in Galilee, some days after that of the resurrection. This is excluded by the statements of his apparition to them in Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection, and of his ascension at the end of the same day. Also by the order that they were to remain in Jerusalem till endowed with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

(6.) He appears to certain of the apostles when fishing in the sea of Galilee at least ten days after the resurrection. This is excluded by his having ascended to heaven the same day that he rose from the dead, and by the apostles having been required to remain in Jerusalem till Pentecost.

(7.) He appears first to Peter, as declared by Paul. This is excluded by the first appearance having been to females, either two or one, as stated by Matthew, Mark, and John, or else to the two disciples at Emmaus as stated by Luke; and also by the accounts in Luke and John to the effect that Peter singly, or with another, merely looked into the tomb and saw only the grave clothes.

(8.) After an appearance to "the twelve," he shows himself to more than five hundred brethren at once, as also said by Paul. This is excluded by there having been but about a hundred and twenty brethren in all, by the apparitions having been made "not to all the people," but only to chosen witnesses, and by the ascension having taken place after the exhibition to "the eleven."

(9, 10.) He subsequently appears to James, and afterwards again to all the apostles. These are excluded by the ascension having occurred after he had once shown himself to the eleven.

Finally, as to the fact of the ascension, Luke describes it to have occurred on the day of the resurrection at Bethany. Matthew leaves it to be inferred that it took place some days later from a mountain in Galilee, the last instructions by Jesus

to the apostles, in parting with them, having been given there. John shows that it had not occurred at least ten days after the resurrection, the appearance in Galilee he speaks of having taken place at the earliest then; and the book of the Acts declares that it happened at the mount of Olives, and not until forty days after the resurrection.

P.—Assuredly you leave one nothing connected with this marvellous event upon which the mind can rest in the assurance of its occurrence. It is impossible, in this maze of contradictions, to select any one of the descriptions of the appearance of Jesus as absolutely to be depended on. Directly you contemplate one account it becomes negatived by another. And upon the exercise of faith in this stupendous miracle our eternal welfare is, I understand, made to depend!

S.—It is so. "He that believeth not shall be damned," as Jesus himself declared on one of these occasions (Mark xvi. 16).

Reception of evidence to resurrection by the disciples.

P.—That is certainly startling. How were the disciples themselves prepared for the event? And how did they accept the evidence as offered to them by others, or presented personally to themselves?

S.—Although Jesus had repeatedly told them, when in life, that he was to be killed and raised again the third day, they had no expectation of his resurrection, and were taken quite by surprise when it actually occurred. And although he had raised three persons from death in their presence, and had conferred the same power upon themselves, whether exercised or not, and though he was known to them as a divine personage over whom death could have no real hold, it was with the utmost difficulty that they could even believe their senses when they saw him alive again. They fly when he is arrested, and mourn at his death as if he were a common mortal with whom they had parted for ever. Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus occupy themselves in embalming his body, not dreaming that it was to rise in life. The women prepare spices, and come to the tomb for the same purpose. When they find the tomb empty, they are "much perplexed," and require to be reminded by the angels that he had prophesied that he would rise that third day. When they report "all these things" to the apostles, giving them the assurance of the

angels of the accomplishment of the prophecy, their words are treated "as idle tales," and not believed. Peter and John go to the tomb to satisfy themselves, ignorant "as yet" of the scripture "that he must rise again from the dead." Mary Magdalene goes to them who had been with Jesus, and tells them that she has seen him alive again, and they believe her not. The two who met him at Emmaus, although they had heard of the vision of angels seen by the women, remained without hope. They had thought that Jesus "had been he which should have redeemed Israel," and his death presented to them an insuperable bar to his action. They had no belief in his resurrection, whatever the angels might have said, or he himself have prophesied. And after he had appeared to themselves, and they take their testimony to the residue, "neither believed they them." Thomas is stout indeed in his incredulity. The resurrections wrought by Jesus had no effect upon him; nor his repeated predictions that he should himself come to life again; nor the declaration of Mary Magdalene, that angels had told her he had risen, and that she had seen him herself; nor the corroboration of her testimony given by the two at Emmaus, that he had appeared also to them; nor the positive statements of the ten other apostles, that he had been in their midst taking food with them. Nothing but personal demonstration to himself of the most convincing kind would satisfy him of the identity of Jesus in life. And when the disciples, according to appointment, went to meet him on the mountain in Galilee, "some," not crediting the evidence of their own eyes, still "doubted."

P.—It is hard that we who receive these facts, from whom we know not, and through how many diverse transmitted channels it is impossible to trace, by the medium of a book of no ascertained authorship, should be required to accept them at the peril of our eternal salvation, when the immediate followers of Jesus are represented to have had no reliance in his words, or in those of their associates, or even, as respects some of them, in the evidence of their own senses. Belief is not to be attained by the will. It must be induced by adequate and reliable testimony, and the more wondrous the subject presented for belief, the more complete and indisputable should be the evidence. In the present instance, the fact offered

runs counter to all experience, and the statements of it are such as would not be accepted in proof of any circumstance whatsoever. When considered together, these statements defeat each other very effectually. If Jesus repeatedly predicted his death upon the cross, and his resurrection, when his death came about as foretold, the disciples must necessarily have been in expectation of the further fulfilment to be accomplished in his resurrection. They had seen him bring others to life, they knew of his divine origin and infinite power. He had said that death could have no hold over him, and they had only to wait to the third day to see his promised return to life brought to pass. They could not possibly, one and all, have dismissed his words from their minds and forgotten that he ever made such a prediction. Nor could they, or any of them, have refused belief in his return to life when the fact was so repeatedly attested and forced upon them by his bodily presence. Either the disciples had had no such aids to the exercise of their faith, there had been no such predictions uttered by Jesus, and no resurrections, in the case of others, wrought by him, or the narrators, in depicting their hardness of belief, have been seeking to give effect to their representations by a condition of things wholly imaginative. When the facts themselves, as presented in regard to the resurrection, are found unreliable, it is easy to understand that the concomitants should be wanting in the complexion of probability and truth.

Jesus rising in his natural body.

I observe it prominently insisted on that Jesus reappeared in his proper natural body, with the same flesh, bones, and wounds, he had before his death. Is it a feature of the faith of the Christians that their resurrection is to be carried out in this physical manner?

S.—It is not. Paul answered the question, "How are the dead raised up?" by saying that there were two bodies, a natural and a spiritual one, that we are sown, or buried, as in the natural body, and raised in the spiritual one; and he distinctly declared that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven," putting it that this would amount to "corruption" inheriting "incorruption," which could not be (1 Cor. xv. 35-54).

P.—And yet Jesus is described as having passed into heaven in his natural body! I presume also that the others, who in

the Old Testament are said to have been translated without experiencing death, did so likewise.

S.—You refer to Enoch and Elijah. The statements certainly make them ascend in the bodies they had while in life.

P.—Paul should assuredly have accounted for these phenomena which were so much against the order he laid down. But perhaps he did not hold that Jesus rose from the dead and showed himself in his natural body. In what aspect, for example, was Jesus presented to himself, when he saw him as "one born out of due time?"

Appearance of Jesus to Paul.

S.—There are three accounts of the circumstance on which this alleged vision of the risen Jesus is based, one given by the writer of the book of Acts in his own terms, and two as taken down from Paul's lips (ix. 1-7; xxii. 6-10; xxvi. 13-18). In these, all that is said to have occurred is that a great light appeared, and that a voice came from heaven addressing Paul, and to which he responded, and that this voice proclaimed itself to be that of "Jesus of Nazareth," no exhibition of any figure being made. This, however, is held to have amounted to "the Lord Jesus" having "appeared" unto him (Acts ix. 17).

P.—It is singular that Jesus when in heaven should still describe himself by his earthly location of Nazareth. Were there others with Paul at this time, and, if so, what may be their testimony?

S.—There were persons with Paul, but it is quite uncertain what they witnessed. According to one account they saw the light, but in the others this is not declared. Then in one it is said they heard the voice, and in another that they did not do so.

P.—The whole, then, may have been the result of pure imagination on the part of Paul. Is there anything in what is known of him to negative such an imputation?

S.—On the contrary, he was evidently of a highly excitable and imaginative constitution. He could boast of frequent "visions and revelations of the Lord," and fancied once that he had been "caught up to the third heaven," where he "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter;" and such had been "the abundance of the revelations" made to him, that some physical infirmity, which he calls "a thorn

in the flesh," or a "messenger of Satan," was he conceived imposed upon him to repress and keep down exulting thoughts (2 Cor. xii. 1-7). He believed that supernatural communications were made to him to visit and preach in Macedonia, and to prolong his ministry in Corinth, and that an angel from God had appeared to him to warn him that he should be brought before Cæsar (Acts xvi. 9; xviii. 9, 10; xxvii. 23, 24). He was more addicted than any one to those extatic utterances which were called "speaking with tongues" (1 Cor. xiv. 18). And though Jesus had selected the eleven apostles as his special witnesses, and these, with over a hundred more, had been miraculously inspired at Pentecost to disseminate his doctrine, the boast of Paul was that he had received his instruction from an independent source, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father;" and in the assurance of this he represents himself as proceeding to Jerusalem, the head quarters of the faith, "by revelation," to carry on his mission.

P.—Paul is evidently an unreliable witness for the supernatural. And as regards his having been taught from above without human instrumentality, what is this but to show the unimportance of such a personal mission as is attributed to Jesus? Had such a being as he is described to be been sent from heaven to instruct and suffer for man on earth, Paul, naturally, would have sought out those who had been his selected associates, and have learnt from them all that could be known of the divine master; and if Paul could be fully empowered to preach the gospel, and to be in fact the founder of its developed doctrines, without such contact with the witnesses to the career of Jesus, then the circumstances of that career, and therewith the career itself, become unnecessary. If divine action through the spirit was all that was requisite for the qualification of such a man as Paul, others could equally well, in the same way, be indoctrinated and assured, and the direct mission of Jesus to show forth the ways of God might be dispensed with. Paul, I take it, means it to be understood, that what he had experienced is the highest and truest form of teaching, and many here would be disposed to agree with him.

But to revert to the physical resurrection of Jesus. If Paul could classify the vision to himself, amounting at most to the exhibition of a supernatural light and the sound of a voice from heaven, with those apparitions of Jesus recounted in the gospels, these latter may in his idea have been as devoid of a real bodily presence as was his own vision.

Do any of the other writers of the New Testament, independent of the authors of the gospels, speak of the nature of the resurrection of Jesus?

Testimony of the apostles.

S.—There are epistles attributed to James, Peter, John, and Jude, all of whom were apostles, and present, as it is said, when Jesus made his appearance; but not one of them refers to the occurrence. Jesus is spoken of in the Apocalypse as one who had been dead and was alive again in heaven (i. 5, 18; ii. 8), but nothing is said of his actual appearance as risen on earth, of which the ostensible writer is declared to have been a witness. Peter also adverts to him as "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by (or in) the spirit," by which he also went and preached unto other "spirits" who are said to have been "in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 18), describing thus a resurrection of a spiritual, not a physical order.

P.—The being in life again in heaven, all might look for, but this is a different thing from having been put to death in the flesh, and quickened also in the flesh, as the evangelists represent.

Witnesses to the resurrection.

It is remarkable, considering the important consequences depending on accepting the fact of the resurrection, that the witnesses chosen before whom to display it were just those persons, of whom it was said that they had stolen away the body, and whose evidence was least likely to be received. Why were the manifestations confined to a few particular friends, and not made openly before those in hostility to Jesus, so as to confound them, and to secure a body of testimony that would have been above suspicion?

S.—I cannot tell you. Jesus had certainly, according to the evangelists, boasted to the Jews that if they destroyed the temple, meaning his body, he would raise it up in three days, and he had called them an evil and adulterous generation, to whom no sign should be given but that of the prophet Jonas, explaining that, as Jonas was three days in the whale's belly, so he was to be but three days in his grave; and it would be fair to expect that he would redeem these pledges

by manifesting himself on the third day to the objectors and opponents to whom he so committed himself as to the issue to be achieved.

P.—Assuredly, his not doing so amounts to something very like an evasion. Taking this into account, together with the silence of the apostolical epistles as to his physical resurrection, and the discordant representations of the event itself appearing later in the gospels, I conclude that the doctrine of the physical resurrection, when offered for acceptance, could not have been received without considerable demur.

The early heresies.

S.—From the very outset of Christianity serious differences arose among the Christian community, and the earliest of their writings, which have come down to us, are in refutation of what were deemed heresies. The heresies of course preceded the efforts to rebut them, and therefore the first we know of the actual working of Christianity is the prevalence of conflicting views among those who were its adherents. With the outer world the contest would be natural, but when we see the followers of the system thus in dissension, it is symptomatic of the landmarks of the faith not being demonstratively laid down. The existence of serious contrariety of opinion is to be traced even in the apostolic writings. There were those in the community who were stigmatized as "false apostles, deceitful workers" (2 Cor. xi. 13), "false prophets" (1 John iv. 1). "Beware," said Paul, "of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Phil. iii. 2); "I would," he declared, "they were even cut off which trouble you" (Gal. v. 12). "The learned have reckoned upwards of ninety different heresies which arose within the first three centuries,"[1] and, very remarkably, the earliest of which we have any knowledge were in respect of the nature of the being of Jesus, and, prominently, of the actuality of his resurrection. The heresies of the first century, says Mr Greg, "related almost exclusively to the person and nature of Jesus; on which points we have many indications that great difference of opinion existed, even during the apostolic period. The obnoxious doctrines especially pointed out in the (fourth) gospel appear—to be those held by Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans," which, according to Hug, he proceeds to explain, viewed Jesus as a natural man,

[1] Taylor's Diegesis, 346.

but endowed with an emanation from God whereby superhuman power was conferred upon him. This emanation, at the period of his sufferings, "resumed his separate existence, abandoned Jesus to pain and death, and soared upwards to his native heaven. Cerinthus distinguished *Jesus* and *Christ*, *Jesus* and the *Son of God*, as beings of different nature and dignity. The Nicolaitans held similar doctrines."[1] "Ignatius," observes Mr Hennell, "had been asserting with some vehemence that Jesus Christ suffered upon the cross really, or in the flesh, apparently in opposition to the Cerinthian heresy, that the divine soul or Christ left the body of Jesus to suffer in appearance only. To make his point still stronger, he says that he knows that even after his resurrection he was still in the flesh. The Cerinthian heresy, that the Christ or divine soul of the Saviour had a separate existence from the human being Jesus, and left him at the crucifixion, would give peculiar interest to all legends asserting his corporeal nature after his resurrection, and might occasion some of them."[2] "Theodoret informs us of Cerinthus, who was contemporary with the apostle John and his followers, that he held and taught that Christ (*i.e.*, Jesus) suffered and was crucified, but that he did not rise from the tomb; but that he *will* rise when there shall be a general resurrection. Philaster says of him that he taught—that Christ was not *yet* risen from the dead, only he announces that he will rise."[3] Dr Lardner (IV. 368) is also cited for this view of the doctrine of Cerinthus.[4]

Cerinthus, as has been seen, was of the apostolic age, and the Nicolaitans, who held similar views, were so likewise, being referred to by name in Rev. ii. 6. At this early period, then, the fact of the resurrection was disputed. "The prevalent opinion amongst the early Christian converts—was," says Mosheim (I. 136), "that Christ existed in *appearance* only, and not in reality, and that his body was a mere phantom. Dr Priestly, in his Church History (I. 97), confirms this statement."[5] "In the gospel of the apostle Barnabas, it is explicitly asserted, that Jesus Christ *was not* crucified, but that he

[1] The Creed of Christendom, 127, 128. [2] Hennell's Works, 187, 188, note.
[3] Taylor's Diegesis, 354. [4] Immortality of the Soul, R. Cooper, 39.
[5] Idem, 40.

was taken up into the third heaven by the ministry of four angels, Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel ; that he should not die till the very end of the world, and that it was Judas Iscariot who was crucified in his stead."[1] Archbishop Wake's Apostolic Fathers is referred to by Mr Cooper for a like statement of the doctrine of Paul's companion Barnabas. "Basilides, a man so ancient that he boasted to follow Glaucias as his master, who was the disciple of St Peter, taught that Christ was NOT crucified: but that a metamorphosis took place between him and Simon, the Cyrenian, who was crucified in his stead, while Jesus stood by and mocked at the mistake of the Jews."[2] "The Ebionites," says Dr Hug, in his Introduction to the New Testament, "a numerous body of early christians, denied the miraculous conception of Christ, and, with the Nazarenes, looked upon him *only as an ordinary man*. They also denied that he suffered on the cross, and asserted that he had flown away to heaven."[3] The book of the acts or journeys of the apostles Peter, John, Thomas, and Paul, taught that Christ only appeared as a man, and took various forms, his head sometimes reaching to the clouds, and that another was crucified in his stead. The gospel of the Helkesaites, of about A.D. 114, said he was a certain power whose height was sixty-six miles.[4] "The Docetæ — were willing to get over the difficulty of a dying god, by their doctrine of apparitions. They said that Jesus died only in appearance, and hence their name of Docetæ, or *seemers*."[5] Tertullian speaks of this heresy existing in the time of the apostles.[6] "While the apostles were yet on earth, nay, while the blood of Christ was still recent on mount Calvary, the body of Christ was asserted to be a mere phantom."[7] Mr Taylor specifies several in succession who were of this way of thinking. Cerdon, referred to by Dr Lardner, held that "our Saviour Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin, nor did appear at all in the flesh, nor had he descended from heaven ;

[1] Taylor's Diegesis, 353, quoting Toland's Nazarenus, I. 5. 17.
[2] Taylor's Syntagma, 110, quoting Pearson on the Creed, II. 249.
[3] R. Cooper's Lectures on the Bible, 117.
[4] Taylor's Syntagma, 110, quoting Jones on the Canon, I. 12, 226.
[5] Sharpe's Egyptian Mythology, 99. [6] Taylor's Diegesis. 348.
[7] Taylor's Diegesis, 348, quoting Cotelerius Patres Apostol., II. 24.

but that he was seen by men only *putatively*, that is, they *fancied* they saw him, but did not see him in reality, for he was only a *shadow*, and *seemed* to suffer, but in reality did not suffer at all. Marcion of Pontus, A.D. 127, the successor of Cerdon—was so far from believing that our Saviour was born of a virgin, that he did not allow that he had ever been born at all. He maintained that the son of God took the exterior form of a man, and *appeared* as a man, but without being born, or gradually growing up to the full stature of a man : he had showed himself at once in Galilee, completely equipped for his divine mission, and immediately assumed the character of a saviour." Lucian, A.D. 143, "one of the most eminent forgers of sacred legends of the second century," says that the apostle John, "attempting to touch the body of Christ, perceived no hardness of the flesh, and met with no resistance from it, but thrust his hand into the inner part." Appelles, A.D. 160, a disciple of Marcion, but seceding from him, "maintained that Christ was not an appearance only, but had flesh really, though not derived from the Virgin Mary, for as he descended from the supercelestial places to this earth he collected to himself a body out of the four elements. Having thus formed to himself a corporeity, he really appeared in this world, and taught men the knowledge of heavenly things." In this flesh Apelles held that he suffered, but threw it off as he ascended to heaven. Faustus also denied that Christ was born.[1]

Another heresy that soon sprung up was the denial of the divinity of Jesus. "Those," continues Mr Taylor, "who denied the *humanity* of Christ were the first class of professing Christians, and not only first in order of time, but in dignity of character, in intelligence, and in moral influence. Those who denied the *divinity*, were the second, and in every sense a less philosophical and less important body."[2]

These controversies were authoritatively pronounced upon at the council of Nicæa, assembled by Constantine, A.D. 325, where the nature and being of Jesus, as the God-man, were decided on and declared by vote.

Foundation of the history.

Taking the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the career of Jesus was short and obscure. Ostensibly of humble

[1] Taylor's Diegesis, 349-351. [2] Idem, 352.

parentage, he was not known beyond his own neighbourhood, till his last few days, when he suffered, as a disturber of the public peace, at Jerusalem. He courted notice only during the last year of his life. The region in which he moved was peopled by an ignorant and barbaric race, with the lowest of whom he habitually associated, being accounted the friend of publicans and sinners, and having mostly poor fishermen as his chosen companions and disciples. If there is any reality in his history, it is out of materials such as these that the representations of him, as the expected Messiah, had to be worked out. Viewing him as a God-man, it would have been interesting to know how such a being passed through the stages of infancy and adolescence, eras the type of which is a struggle onwards out of helplessness, ignorance, and physical infirmity or insufficience. But here the historians preserve a prudent silence, launching him into action at the mature age of thirty. Two of them, Mark and John, do not even attempt to account for his birth, but introduce him only at this time, when he is first brought to public view at his meeting with John at the Jordan. It was comparatively easy, at such a time of life, in an age when knowledge was scant and difficult of circulation, to ascribe to the subject of the narrative those attributes, powers, and manifestations in action, which would show him to be superhuman, and therefore, as it would then be understood, divine, and to shape events suitable to illustrate such a representation. The allegation that he wrought miracles, uttered prophecy, and rose from the dead, would be supports readily suggesting themselves. The ignorant, prone to accept the statements of others without sifting, and greedy of the marvellous, would receive what was said with little hesitation, and propagate and enforce the belief in their respective circles. The better instructed and reflective would question the realities of the facts alleged, and endeavour to account for them in some manner doing the least violence to their perceptions. And hence the heresies that occurred.

Existence of the heresies disclosed in the scripture.

It is said to have been a satisfaction to Jesus that his doctrine was such as to commend itself to the "babes" in knowledge, but to be unsuited to "the wise and prudent" (Matt. ii. 25); and in the like spirit Paul, conscious that the opposition came from the better informed, of a purpose set at naught

all the resources of human learning. God, he represented, discouraging mental culture, had chosen "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and the acquisitions of "science" and "philosophy" were therefore to be put aside and accounted as "profane and vain babblings" (1 Cor. i. 17-29; ii. 1-8; iii. 18-21; Col. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 20).

The efforts made in the apostolic epistles to enforce the real doctrine, serve to disclose the character of the opposing views which had to be refuted. The corporeal nature of Jesus was disputed. To this it was said, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John iv. 2, 3). It would be a small matter to allow the human nature of any man. The earnestness with which it was demanded to allow this of Jesus, is comprehensible when we find that he was taken to be a mere phantom. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John i. 14). "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). This was the position it was sought to uphold in its completeness. The actualities of the crucifixion were misrepresented, and some said that another, whether Judas or Simon of Cyrene, who bore his cross, had suffered in substitution for Jesus. Paul, apparently in view of these heresies, said, emphatically, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2). "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). Belief in the bare fact of a crucifixion could in itself involve no sense of foolishness. It was the idea of a divine personage being subjected to death that the cultivated minds resented as foolish, and it was this sort of disbelief that Paul was combating. "O foolish Galatians," he exclaimed, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. iii. 1). The resurrection was either explained away or denied, and this had to be maintained as an actual occurrence. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 12). This was not addressed to the outside world, who had in no sense accepted Jesus. It is the congregation at Corinth, per-

sons "called to be saints," who are in question, "among whom," in view doubtless of the difficulties involved in the creed offered to them, the fact of any such resurrection as that said to have occurred in the instance of Jesus was questioned. Others again held, in some way, that "the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. ii. 18). "Remember," says the same preacher, "that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (ver. 8.) The endeavour of the evangelists to establish this resurrection, as a physical fact, in the face of the surrounding attempts to qualify the reality of its character, is obvious enough. It is hence that they introduce the flesh, the bones, and the wounds of Jesus, and furthermore humanize the apparition by making him partake of material food. But in their aim at the marvellous they fall, as might be expected, into inconsistencies. The apparition, notwithstanding that it is composed of such solid substances, passes through closed doors, and vanishes as ether, and though representing the very person of Jesus, it is not recognised by those who were intimate with him, and had seen him but three days before in life.

The opening for fictitious representations.

P.—The existence of such strange views of the being and person of Jesus, maintained by those living so close upon his times, shows that no real historical materials respecting him could then have been currently at command. Of a known personage, with whom multitudes were familiar, it never could have been said, shortly after he passed away, that he had been a phantom, that he had suffered in appearance only, that he had metamorphosed himself, that his head at times reached the clouds or to a height of many miles. It is evident, if there were such a person as Jesus, that his life had come so little under the observation of his fellow-men that out of his own immediate circle anything, in those days of ignorance and superstition, could be said of him, and be believed. While therefore heresies, such as you describe, might spring up in or about the alleged field of his operations, it is also clear that ideal histories, ascribing to him a supernatural birth and miraculous powers, such as appear in the writings of the evangelists, might be framed and fall into circulation with equal facility. The solid framework of a known actual life being wanting as a governing element, there has been liberty for the fancy to depict its object in any form, or with any hue, that the imagination might suggest. What surprises me is that among enlightened people of modern days the marvels related of Jesus in the gospels should receive unhesitating acceptance.

How reception of the history is secured.

S.—They would not be so received, it may be confidently asserted, were they not presented in a volume which is accounted to be the word of God. The idea that the book, in some way or other, is of divine origin, lets in all its contents without a question. That such is the nature of the book, people are taught from the earliest dawn of their intelligence, and being ascribed to divine authority, it becomes profanity to treat it as you would any other book. To investigate its statements amounts to entertaining the doubt whether these statements are reliable or otherwise, and this is to be repelled as incipient infidelity. One supports the other in unquestioning faith, and paid ministrations, operating with the sensible advantage of conforming to prevailing tenets, bind all together in undisturbed confidence. The ancient record is considered to have been miraculously preserved, in testimony against themselves by those hostile to the faith. This is the rôle the Jews fulfil. The history of the canon is commonly unknown. What comes under the head of Moses is held to have been derived actually from Moses. The same as to the Christian writings. The gospels of Matthew and John are from the actual companions of Jesus, and these are supported by other inspired contemporaneous records. The hollowness of the pretensions of the Jews to be the chosen people of God is not suspected. It is not seen by what wrenchings their records have been applied to the support of the Christian narratives. Nor are the inconsistencies of the latter more than glanced at. Often they are wholly unobserved. The theme they are occupied with is too solemn, and too sacred, to be desecrated with investigation. What warps a man's mind, effectually overpowers it, and here the very exercise of reason is considered to be fatal to true perceptions.

Happily from this enslavement of the understanding we are beginning to be set free. The means of judgment have multiplied upon us, and therewith the liberty of judging has been used. And with the great testimony that God ever gives of himself in the action of his laws, as operating physically, mentally, and spiritually, the end of the reign of human representations of him may, with confidence, be awaited.

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